



JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

IN the reign of King Arthur, there lived in the county of Cornwall, near the Land's End of England, a wealthy farmer who had one only son called Jack. He was brisk and of a ready lively wit, so that whatever he could not perform by force and strength, he did by his quick wit and cleverness. Never was any person heard of that could worst him, and he very often even baffled wise men by his sharp and ready invention.

In those days the Mount of Cornwall was kept by a huge and monstrous giant of eighteen feet in height, and about three yards in girth, of a fierce and grim face, the terror of all the towns and villages near. He lived in a cave in the midst of the mount, and would not suffer any one else to live near him. His food was other men's cattle, which often became his prey, for whensoever he wanted food he would wade over to the mainland, where he would furnish himself with whatever came in his way. The good folk, at his approach, forsook their homes, while he

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seized on their cattle, making nothing of carrying half-a-dozen oxen on his back at a time ; and as for their sheep and hogs, he would tie them round his waist like a bunch of bandeliers. This course he had followed for many years, so that all Cornwall had become poor through his robberies.

One day Jack, happening to be present at the town hall when the magistrates were sitting in council about the giant, asked what reward would be given to the person who destroyed him. The giant's treasure, they said, was the reward. Quoth Jack, " Then let me undertake it."

So he took a horn, shovel, and pickaxe, and went over to the Mount in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, when he fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and nearly as broad, covering it over with long sticks and straw. Then strewing a little mould upon it, it appeared like plain ground. This done, Jack placed himself on the contrary side of the pit, farthest from the giant's lodging, and, just at the break of day, he put the horn to his mouth, and blew, Tantivy, Tantivy. The unexpected noise aroused the giant, who rushed from his cave, crying : " You bold villain, are you come here to disturb my rest ? You shall pay dearly for this. Satisfaction I will have, and this it shall be, I will take you whole and broil you for breakfast," which he had no sooner uttered, than tumbling into the pit, he made the very foundations of the Mount to shake. " Oh, giant," quoth Jack, " where are you now ? Oh faith, you are gotten now into Lob's Pound, where I will surely plague you for your wicked words : what do you think now of broiling me for your breakfast ? Will no other diet serve you but poor Jack ? " Thus having teased the giant for a while,

he gave him a most weighty knock with his pickaxe on the very crown of his head, and killed him on the spot.

This done, Jack filled up the pit with earth, and went to search the cave, which he found contained much treasure. When the magistrates heard of this, they said he should henceforth be called Jack the Giant-killer, and gave him a sword and an embroidered belt, on which were written these words in letters of gold—

“ Here’s the right valiant Cornishman,
Who slew the giant Cormelian.”

The news of Jack’s victory soon spread over all the West of England, so that another giant, named Blunderbore, hearing of it, vowed to be revenged on the little hero, if ever it was his fortune to light on him. This giant was the lord of an enchanted castle standing in the midst of a lonesome wood. Now Jack, about four months afterwards, walking near this wood in his journey to Wales, being weary, seated himself near a pleasant fountain and fell fast asleep. While he was enjoying his repose, the giant, coming for water, there found him, and knew him to be the far-famed Jack by the lines written on the belt. Without ado, he took Jack on his shoulders and carried him towards his enchanted castle. Now, as they passed through a thicket, the rustling of the boughs awakened Jack, who was strangely surprised to find himself in the clutches of the giant. His terror was not yet begun, for on entering the castle, he saw the ground strewn with human bones, the giant telling him his own would ere long be there also. After this the giant locked poor Jack in an immense chamber, leaving him there while he went to fetch another giant living in the same wood to help him to put

an end to Jack. While he was gone, dreadful shrieks and cries affrighted Jack, especially a voice which said many times—

“ Do what you can to get away,
Or you'll become the giant's prey ;
He's gone to fetch his brother, who
Will kill, likewise devour you too.”

This dreadful noise had almost distracted Jack, who, going to the window, beheld afar off the two giants coming towards the castle. “ Now,” quoth Jack to himself, “ my death or my escape is at hand.” Now, there were strong cords in a corner of the room in which Jack was, and two of these he took, and made a strong noose at the end ; and while the giants were unlocking the iron gate of the castle he threw the ropes over each of their heads. Then drawing the other ends across a beam, and pulling with all his might, he throttled them. Then, seeing they were black in the face, and sliding down the rope, he came to their heads, when they could not defend themselves, and drawing his sword, slew them both. Then, taking the giant's keys, and unlocking the rooms, he found three fair ladies tied by the hair of their heads, almost starved to death. “ Sweet ladies,” quoth Jack, “ I have killed this monster and his brutish brother, and so set you free.” This said, he gave them the keys, and so went on his journey to Wales. Having but little money, Jack found it well to make the best of his way by travelling as fast as he could, but losing his road, he was benighted, and could not get a place to rest in until, coming into a narrow valley, he found a large house, and by reason of his present needs took courage to knock at the gate. But what was his surprise

when there came forth a monstrous giant with two heads ; yet he did not appear so fiery as the others were, for he was a Welsh giant, and what he did was by private and secret malice under the false show of friendship. Jack, having told his state to the giant, was shown into a bedroom, where, in the dead of night, he heard his host muttering—

“ Though here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light :
My club shall dash your brains outright ! ”

“ Say’st thou so ? ” quoth Jack ; “ that is like one of your Welsh tricks, yet I hope to be cunning enough for you.” Then, getting out of bed, he laid a billet of wood in the bed in his stead, and hid himself in a corner of the room. At the dead time of the night in came the Welsh giant, who struck several heavy blows on the bed with his club, thinking he had broken every bone in Jack’s skin. The next morning Jack, laughing in his sleeve, gave him hearty thanks for his night’s lodging. “ How have you rested ? ” quoth the giant ; “ did you not feel anything in the night ? ” “ No,” quoth Jack, “ nothing but a rat, which gave me two or three slaps with her tail.” With that, greatly wondering, the giant led Jack to breakfast, bringing him a bowl containing four gallons of hasty pudding. Being loath to let the giant think it too much for him, Jack put a large leather bag under his loose coat, in such a way that he could convey the pudding into it without its being seen. Then, telling the giant he would show him a trick, taking a knife, Jack ripped open the bag, and out came all the hasty pudding. Whereupon, saying, “ Odds splutters, hur can do that trick hurself,” the monster took the knife, and ripping open his body, fell down dead.

Now, it fell in these days that King Arthur's only son begged his father to give him a large sum of money, in order that he might go and seek his fortune in the country of Wales, where lived a beautiful lady possessed with seven evil spirits. The king did his best to persuade his son from it, but in vain ; so at last granted the request, and the prince set out with two horses, one loaded with money, the other for himself to ride upon. Now, after several days' travel, he came to a market-town in Wales, where he beheld a vast crowd of people gathered together. The prince asked the reason of it, and was told that they had arrested a corpse for several large sums of money which the dead man owed when he died. The prince replied that it was a pity creditors should be so cruel, and said, "Go bury the dead, and let his creditors come to my lodging, and there their debts shall be paid." So they came, but in such great numbers that before night he had almost left himself moneyless.

Now Jack the Giant-killer, coming that way, was so taken with the generosity of the prince, that he wished to be his servant. This being agreed upon, the next morning they set forward on their journey together, when, as they were riding out of the town, an old woman called after the prince, saying, "He has owed me twopence these seven years ; pray pay me as well as the rest." Putting his hand to his pocket, the prince gave the woman all he had left, so that after their day's refreshment, which cost what small spell Jack had by him, they were without a penny between them. When the sun began to grow low, the king's son said, "Jack, since we have no money, where can we lodge this night ?" But Jack replied, "Master, we'll do well enough, for I have an uncle lives within two miles of this



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A huge and monstrous Giant with three heads.

place ; he is a huge and monstrous giant with three heads ; he'll fight five hundred men in armour, and make them to fly before him." " Alas ! " quoth the prince, " what shall we do there ? He'll certainly chop us up at a mouthful. Nay, we are scarce enough to fill one of his hollow teeth ! " " It is no matter for that," quoth Jack ; " I myself will go before and prepare the way for you ; therefore tarry and wait till I return." Jack then rode away full speed, and coming to the gate of the castle, he knocked so loud that he made the hills around to echo. The giant roared out at this like thunder, " Who's there ? " He was answered, " None but your poor Cousin Jack." Quoth he, " What news with my poor Cousin Jack ? " He replied, " Dear Uncle, heavy news, God wot ! " " Prithee," quoth the giant, " what heavy news can come to me ? I am a giant with three heads, and besides thou knowest I can fight five hundred men in armour, and make them fly like chaff before the wind." " Oh, but," quoth Jack, " here's the king's son a-coming with a thousand men in armour to kill you and destroy all that you have ! " " Oh, Cousin Jack," said the giant, " this is heavy news indeed ! I will immediately run and hide myself, and thou shalt lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys until the prince is gone." Having secured the giant, Jack fetched his master, when they made themselves heartily merry whilst the poor giant lay trembling in a vault under the ground.*

Early in the morning Jack furnished his master with a fresh supply of gold and silver, and then sent him three miles forward on his journey, at which time the prince was pretty well out of the smell of the giant. Jack then returned, and let the giant out of the vault, who asked what he should give him for keeping the castle safe. " Why," quoth Jack,

"I desire nothing but the old coat and cap, together with the old rusty sword and slippers which are at your bed's head." Quoth the giant, "Thou shalt have them; and pray keep them for my sake, for they are things of excellent use. The coat will keep you invisible, the cap will furnish you with knowledge, the sword cuts asunder whatever you strike, and the shoes are of extraordinary swiftness. These may be useful to you, therefore take them with all my heart." Taking them, Jack thanked his uncle, and then having overtaken his master, they quickly arrived at the house of the lady the prince sought, who, finding the prince to be a suitor, prepared a splendid banquet for him. After the feasting was done, she wiped his mouth with a handkerchief, saying, "You must show me that handkerchief to-morrow morning, or else you will lose your head." With that she put it in her bosom. The prince went to bed in great sorrow, but Jack's cap of knowledge taught him how it was to be got. In the middle of the night she called upon her familiar spirit to carry her to Lucifer. But Jack put on his coat of darkness and his shoes of swiftness, and was there as soon as she. When she entered the place of the evil one, she gave the handkerchief to old Lucifer, who laid it upon a shelf, whence Jack took it and brought it to his master, who showed it to the lady the next day, and so saved his life. On that day, she saluted the prince, telling him he must show her the lips to-morrow morning that she kissed last night, or lose his head. "Ah," he replied, "if you kiss none but mine, I will." "That is neither here nor there," said she; "if you do not, death's your portion!" At midnight she went as before, and was angry with old Lucifer for letting the handkerchief go. "But now," quoth she, "I will be

too hard for the king's son, for I will kiss thee, and he is to show me thy lips." Which she did, and Jack, who was standing by, cut off the devil's head and brought it under his invisible coat to his master, who the next morning pulled it out by the horns before the lady. The enchantment thus broken the evil spirit left her, and she appeared in all her beauty. They were married the next morning, and soon after went to the court of King Arthur, where Jack, for his many great deeds, was made one of the Knights of the Round Table.

Having been successful in all he did, Jack resolved not to remain idle, but to do what he could for the honour of his king and country, and begged King Arthur to fit him out with a horse and money to help him to travel in search of strange and new adventures. "For," said he, "there are many giants yet living in the farthest part of Wales, to the great damage of your majesty's liege subjects; wherefore, may it please you to encourage me, I do not doubt but in a short time to cut them off root and branch, and so rid all the realm of those giants and monsters of nature." When the king had heard this noble request, he furnished Jack with all he had need of, and Jack started on his pursuit, taking with him the cap of knowledge, the sword of sharpness, the shoes of swiftness, and the invisible coat, the better to succeed in the dangerous adventures which now lay before him.

Jack travelled over vast hills and wonderful mountains, and on the third day came to a large wood, which he had no sooner entered than he heard dreadful shrieks and cries. Casting his eyes round, he beheld with terror a huge giant dragging along a fair lady and a knight by the hair of their heads, with as much ease as if they had been a pair of gloves.

At this sight Jack shed tears of pity, and then, getting off from his horse, he put on his invisible coat, and taking with him his sword of sharpness, at length with a swinging stroke cut off both the giant's legs below the knee, so that his fall made the trees to tremble. At this the courteous knight and his fair lady, after returning Jack their hearty thanks, invited him home, there to refresh his strength after the battle, and receive some ample reward for his good services. But Jack vowed he would not rest until he had found out the giant's den. The knight, hearing this, was very sorrowful, and replied, "Noble stranger, it is too much to run a second risk; this monster lived in a den under yonder mountain, with a brother more fierce and fiery than himself. Therefore, if you should go thither, and perish in the attempt, it would be a heart-breaking to me and my lady. Let me persuade you to go with us, and desist from any further pursuit." "Nay," quoth Jack, "were there twenty, not one should escape my fury. But when I have finished my task, I will come and pay my respects to you."

Jack had not ridden more than a mile and a half, when the cave mentioned by the knight appeared to view, near the entrance of which he beheld the giant sitting upon a block of timber, with a knotted iron club by his side, waiting, as he supposed, for his brother's return with his prey. His goggle eyes were like flames of fire, his face grim and ugly, and his cheeks like a couple of large flitches of bacon, while the bristles of his beard resembled rods of iron wire, and the locks that hung down upon his brawny shoulders were like curled snakes or hissing adders. Jack alighted from his horse, and putting on the coat of darkness, approached near the giant, saying softly, "Oh! are you there? It will not be long ere I shall take you

fast by the beard." The giant all this while could not see him on account of his invisible coat, so that Jack, coming up close to the monster, struck a blow with his sword at his head, but missing his aim he cut off the nose instead. At this the giant roared like claps of thunder, and began to lay about him with his iron club like one stark mad. But Jack, running behind, drove his sword up to the hilt in the giant's back, which caused him to fall down dead. This done, Jack cut off the giant's head, and sent it, with his brother's head also, to King Arthur, by a waggoner he hired for that purpose.

Jack now resolved to enter the giants' cave in search of his treasure, and passing along through a great many windings and turnings, he came at length to a large room paved with freestone, at the upper end of which was a boiling caldron, and on the right hand a large table, at which the giants used to dine. Then he came to a window, barred with iron, through which he looked and beheld a vast crowd of unhappy captives, who, seeing him, cried out, "Alas ! young man, art thou come to be one amongst us in this miserable den ?" "Ay," quoth Jack, "but pray tell me why it is you are so imprisoned ?" "We are kept here," said one, "till such time as the giants have a wish to feast, and then the fattest among us is killed ! And many are the times they have dined upon murdered men !" "Say you so ?" quoth Jack, and straightway unlocked the gate and let them free, who all rejoiced like condemned men at sight of a reprieve. Then searching the giants' coffers, he shared the gold and silver equally amongst them.

It was about sunrise the next day when Jack, after seeing the captives on their way to their homes, mounted his horse

to go on his journey, and by the help of his directions, reached the knight's house about noon. He was received here with all signs of joy by the knight and his lady, who in respect to Jack prepared a feast which lasted many days, all the gentry in the neighbourhood being of the company. The worthy knight was likewise pleased to present him with a beautiful ring, on which was engraved a picture of the giant dragging the distressed knight and his lady, with this motto—

“ We are in sad distress you see,
Under a giant's fierce command,
But gain our lives and liberty
By valiant Jack's victorious hand.”

But in the midst of all this mirth a messenger brought the dismal tidings that one Thunderdell, a giant with two heads, having heard of the death of his two kinsmen, came from the northern dales to be revenged on Jack, and was within a mile of the knight's seat, the country people flying before him like chaff. But Jack was no whit daunted, and said, “ Let him come ! I have a tool to pick his teeth ; and you, ladies and gentlemen, walk but forth into the garden, and you shall witness this giant Thunderdell's death and destruction.”

The house of this knight was in the midst of a small island with a moat thirty feet deep and twenty feet wide around it, over which lay a drawbridge. Wherefore Jack employed men to cut through this bridge on both sides, nearly to the middle ; and then, dressing himself in his invisible coat, he marched against the giant with his sword of sharpness. Although the giant could not see Jack he smelt his approach, and cried out in these words—

“ Fee, fi, fo, fum !
I smell the blood of an Englishman !
Be he alive or be he dead,
I’ll grind his bones to make me bread ! ”

“ Say’st thou so ? ” said Jack ; “ then thou art a monstrous miller indeed ! ” At which the giant cried out again, “ Art thou that villain who killed my kinsmen ? Then I will tear thee with my teeth, suck thy blood, and grind thy bones to powder. ” “ You will catch me first, ” quoth Jack, and throwing off his invisible coat, so that the giant might see him, and putting on his shoes of swiftness, he ran from the giant, who followed like a walking castle, so that the very earth seemed to shake at every step. Jack led him a long dance, in order that the knights and ladies might see ; and at last, to end the matter, ran lightly over the drawbridge, the giant, in full speed, pursuing him with his club. Then, coming to the middle of the bridge, the giant’s great weight broke it down, and he tumbled headlong into the water, where he rolled and wallowed like a whale. Jack, standing by the moat, laughed at him all the while ; but though the giant foamed to hear him scoff, and plunged from place to place in the moat, yet he could not get out to be revenged. Jack at length got a cart-rope and cast it over the two heads of the giant, and drew him ashore by a team of horses, and then cut off both his heads with his sword of sharpness, and sent them to King Arthur.

After some time spent in mirth and pastime, Jack, taking leave of the knights and ladies, set out for new adventures. Through many woods he passed, and came at length to the foot of a high mountain. Here, late at night, he found a

lonesome house, and knocked at the door, which was opened by an ancient man with a head as white as snow. "Father," said Jack, "have you any place where a traveller may rest that has lost his way?" "Yes," said the old man; "you are right welcome to my poor cottage." Whereupon Jack entered, and down they sat together, and the old man began to speak as follows:—"Son, I know you are the great conqueror of giants, and behold, my son, on the top of this mountain is an enchanted castle, kept by a giant named Galligantus, who, by the help of an old conjuror, betrays knights and ladies into his castle, where, by magic art, they are transformed into many shapes and forms; but above all, I weep for the fate of a duke's daughter, whom they fetched from her father's garden, carrying her through the air in a burning chariot drawn by fiery dragons, and then shut her up within the castle, and transformed her into the shape of a white hind. And though many knights have tried to break the enchantment, and set her free, yet no one could do it on account of two dreadful griffins which are placed at the castle gate, and which destroy every one who comes near. But you, my son, having an invisible coat, may pass by them unseen. There you will find written on the gates of the castle in large letters by what means the enchantment may be broken." The old man having ended, Jack gave him his hand, and promised that in the morning he would venture his life to free the lady.

In the morning Jack arose and put on his invisible cloak and magic cap and shoes, and prepared himself for the task. When he had reached the top of the mountain, he soon saw the two fiery griffins, but passed them without fear, because of his invisible coat, and having passed beyond

them, he found upon the gates of the castle a golden trumpet hung by a silver chain, under which these lines were written—

“Whoever shall this trumpet blow,
Shall soon the giant overthrow,
And break the black enchantment straight ;
So all shall be in happy state.”

Jack had no sooner read this but he blew the trumpet, at which the castle trembled to its vast foundations, and the giant and conjuror were in horrid fear, biting their thumbs and tearing their hair, knowing their wicked reign was at an end. Then the giant, stooping to take up his club, Jack at one blow cut off his head ; whereupon the conjuror, mounting up into the air, was carried away in a whirlwind. Thus was the enchantment broken, and all the lords and ladies who had so long been transformed into birds and beasts returned to their proper shapes, and the castle vanished away in a cloud of smoke. This being done, the head of Galligantus was likewise, in the usual manner, brought to the court of King Arthur, where, the very next day, Jack followed with the knights and ladies who had been so happily set free. Whereupon, as a reward for his good services, the king bade the duke give his daughter in marriage to honest Jack. So married they were, and the whole kingdom was filled with joy at the wedding. Furthermore, the king bestowed on Jack a noble dwelling, with very beautiful lands thereto belonging, where he and his lady lived in great joy and happiness all the rest of their days.



It is said that in the days of the famed Prince Arthur, who was king of Britain, in the year 516 there lived a great magician, called Merlin, the most learned and skilful enchanter in the world at that time.

This great magician, who could assume any form he pleased, was travelling in the disguise of a poor beggar, and being very much fatigued, he stopped at the cottage of an honest ploughman to rest himself, and asked for some refreshment.

The countryman gave him a hearty welcome, and his wife, who was a very good-hearted, hospitable woman,

soon brought him some milk in a wooden bowl, and some coarse brown bread on a platter.

Merlin was much pleased with this homely repast and the kindness of the ploughman and his wife ; but he could not help seeing that though everything was neat and comfortable in the cottage, they seemed both to be sad and much cast down. He therefore questioned them on the cause of their sadness, and learned that they were miserable because they had no children.

The poor woman declared, with tears in her eyes, that she should be the happiest creature in the world if she had a son ; and although he was no bigger than her husband's thumb, she would be satisfied.

Merlin was so much amused with the idea of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb, that he made up his mind to pay a visit to the queen of the fairies, and ask her to grant the poor woman's wish. The droll fancy of such a little person among the human race pleased the fairy queen too, greatly, and she promised Merlin that the wish should be granted. Accordingly, in a short time after, the ploughman's wife had a son, who, wonderful to relate, was not a bit bigger than his father's thumb.

The fairy queen, wishing to see the little fellow thus born into the world, came in at the window while the mother was sitting up in bed admiring him. The queen kissed the child, and giving it the name of Tom Thumb, sent for some of the fairies, who dressed her little favourite as she bade them.

“ An oak-leaf hat he had for his crown ;
His shirt of web by spiders spun ;
With jacket wove of thistle's down ;

His trowsers were of feathers done.
His stockings, of apple-rind, they tie
With eyelash from his mother's eye :
His shoes were made of mouse's skin,
Tann'd with the downy hair within."

It is remarkable that Tom never grew any larger than his father's thumb, which was only of an ordinary size ; but as he got older he became very cunning and full of tricks. When he was old enough to play with the boys, and had lost all his own cherry-stones, he used to creep into the bags of his playfellows, fill his pockets, and, getting out unseen, would again join in the game.

One day, however, as he was coming out of a bag of cherry-stones, where he had been pilfering as usual, the boy to whom it belonged chanced to see him. " Ah, ha ! my little Tommy," said the boy, " so I have caught you stealing my cherry-stones at last, and you shall be rewarded for your thievish tricks." On saying this, he drew the string tight round his neck, and gave the bag such a hearty shake, that poor little Tom's legs, thighs, and body were sadly bruised. He roared out with pain, and begged to be let out, promising never to be guilty of such bad practices again.

A short time afterwards his mother was making a batter-pudding, and Tom, being very anxious to see how it was made, climbed up to the edge of the bowl ; but unfortunately his foot slipped and he plumped over head and ears into the batter, unseen by his mother, who stirred him into the pudding-bag, and put him in the pot to boil.

The batter had filled Tom's mouth, and prevented him from crying ; but, on feeling the hot water, he kicked and

struggled so much in the pot, that his mother thought that the pudding was bewitched, and, instantly pulling it out of the pot, she threw it to the door. A poor tinker, who was passing by, lifted up the pudding, and, putting it into his budget, he then walked off. As Tom had now got his mouth clear of the batter, he then began to cry aloud, which so frightened the tinker that he flung down the pudding and ran away. The pudding being broke to pieces by the fall, Tom crept out covered over with the batter, and with difficulty walked home. His mother, who was very sorry to see her darling in such a woful state, put him into a tea-cup, and soon washed off the batter ; after which she kissed him, and laid him in bed.

Soon after the adventure of the pudding, Tom's mother went to milk her cow in the meadow, and she took him along with her. As the wind was very high, fearing lest he should be blown away, she tied him to a thistle with a piece of fine thread. The cow soon saw the oak-leaf hat, and, liking the look of it, took poor Tom and the thistle at one mouthful. While the cow was chewing the thistle Tom was afraid of her great teeth, which threatened to crush him in pieces, and he roared out as loud as he could : " Mother, mother ! "

" Where are you, Tommy, my dear Tommy ? " said his mother.

" Here, mother," replied he, " in the cow's mouth."

His mother began to cry and wring her hands ; but the cow, surprised at the odd noise in her throat, opened her mouth and let Tom drop out. Fortunately his mother caught him in her apron as he was falling to the ground, or he would have been dreadfully hurt. She then put Tom in her bosom and ran home with him.

Tom's father made him a whip of a barley straw to drive the cattle with, and having one day gone into the fields, he slipped a foot and rolled into the furrow. A raven, which was flying over, picked him up, and flew with him to the top of a giant's castle that was near the sea-side, and there left him.

Tom was in a dreadful state, and did not know what to do ; but he was soon more dreadfully frightened ; for old Grumbo the giant came up to walk on the terrace, and seeing Tom, he took him up and swallowed him like a pill.

The giant had no sooner swallowed Tom than he began to repent what he had done ; for Tom began to kick and jump about so much that he felt very uncomfortable, and at last threw him up again into the sea. A large fish swallowed Tom the moment he fell into the sea, which was soon after caught, and bought for the table of King Arthur. When they opened the fish in order to cook it, every one was astonished at finding such a little boy, and Tom was quite delighted to be out again. They carried him to the king, who made Tom his dwarf, and he soon grew a great favourite at Court ; for by his tricks and gambols he not only amused the king and queen, but also all the knights of the Round Table.

It is said that when the king rode out on horseback, he often took Tom along with him, and if a shower came on, he used to creep into his majesty's waistcoat pocket, where he slept till the rain was over.

King Arthur one day asked Tom about his parents, wishing to know if they were as small as he was, and whether rich or poor. Tom told the king that his father and mother were as tall as any of the sons about Court, but rather poor. On hearing this, the king carried Tom

to his treasury, the place where he kept all his money, and told him to take as much money as he could carry home to his parents, which made the poor little fellow caper with joy. Tom went immediately to fetch a purse, which was made of a water-bubble, and then returned to the treasury, where he got a silver threepenny-piece to put into it.

Our little hero had some trouble in lifting the burden upon his back ; but he at last succeeded in getting it placed to his mind, and set forward on his journey. However, without meeting with any accident and after resting himself more than a hundred times by the way, in two days and two nights he reached his father's house in safety.

Tom had travelled forty-eight hours with a huge silver-piece on his back, and was almost tired to death, when his mother ran out to meet him, and carried him into the house.

Tom's parents were both happy to see him, and the more so as he had brought such an amazing sum of money with him ; but the poor little fellow was excessively wearied, having travelled half a mile in forty-eight hours, with a huge silver threepenny-piece on his back. His mother, in order to recover him, placed him in a walnut shell by the fireside, and feasted him for three days on a hazel-nut, which made him very sick ; for a whole nut used to serve him a month.

Tom was soon well again ; but as there had been a fall of rain, and the ground was very wet, he could not travel back to King Arthur's Court ; therefore his mother, one day when the wind was blowing in that direction, made a little parasol of cambric paper, and tying Tom to it, she gave him a puff into the air with her mouth, which soon carried him to the king's palace.

Just at the time when Tom came flying across the court-

yard, the cook happened to be passing with the king's great bowl of furmenty, which was a dish his majesty was very fond of ; but unfortunately the poor little fellow fell plump into the middle of it, and splashed the hot furmenty about the cook's face.

The cook, who was an ill-natured fellow, being in a terrible rage at Tom for frightening and scalding him with the furmenty, went straight to the king, and said that Tom had jumped into the royal furmenty, and thrown it down out of mere mischief. The king was so enraged when he heard this that he ordered Tom to be seized and tried for high treason ; and there being no person who dared to plead for him, he was condemned to be beheaded immediately.

On hearing this dreadful sentence pronounced, poor Tom fell a-trembling with fear, but, seeing no means of escape, and observing a miller close to him gaping with his great mouth, as country boobies do at a fair, he took a leap, and fairly jumped down his throat. This exploit was done with such activity that not one person present saw it, and even the miller did not know the trick which Tom had played upon him. Now, as Tom had disappeared, the court broke up, and the miller went home to his mill.

When Tom heard the mill at work he knew he was clear of the court, and therefore he began to roll and tumble about, so that the poor miller could get no rest, thinking he was bewitched ; so he sent for a doctor. When the doctor came, Tom began to dance and sing ; and the doctor, being as much frightened as the miller, sent in haste for five other doctors and twenty learned men.

When they were debating about this extraordinary case, the miller happened to yawn, when Tom, seizing the

chance, made another jump, and alighted safely upon his feet on the middle of the table.

The miller, who was very much provoked at being tormented by such a little pigmy creature, fell into a terrible rage, and, laying hold of Tom, ran to the king with him ; but his majesty, being engaged with state affairs, ordered him to be taken away, and kept in custody till he sent for him.

The cook was determined that Tom should not slip out of his hands this time, so he put him into a mouse-trap, and left him to peep through the wires. Tom had remained in the trap a whole week, when he was sent for by King Arthur, who pardoned him for throwing down the furmenty, and took him again into favour. On account of his wonderful feats of activity, Tom was knighted by the king, and went under the name of the renowned Sir Thomas Thumb. As Tom's clothes had suffered much in the batter-pudding, the furmenty, and the insides of the giant, miller, and fishes, his majesty ordered that he should have a new suit of clothes, and be mounted as a knight.

“ Of butterfly's wings his shirt was made,
His boots of chicken's hide ;
And by a nimble fairy blade,
Well learned in the tailoring trade,
His clothing was supplied.—
A needle dangled by his side ;
A dapper mouse he used to ride,
Thus strutted Tom in stately pride ! ”

It was certainly very diverting to see Tom in this dress, and mounted on the mouse, as he rode out a-hunting with

the king and nobility, who were all ready to expire with laughter at Tom and his fine prancing charger.

One day, as they were riding by a farmhouse, a large cat, which was lurking about the door, made a spring, and seized both Tom and his mouse. She then ran up a tree with them, and was beginning to devour the mouse ; but Tom boldly drew his sword, and attacked the cat so fiercely that she let them both fall, when one of the nobles caught him in his hat, and laid him on a bed of down, in a little ivory cabinet.

The queen of the fairies came soon after to pay Tom a visit, and carried him back to Fairy-land, where he lived several years. During his residence there, King Arthur, and all the persons who knew Tom, had died ; and as he was desirous of being again at Court, the fairy queen, after dressing him in a suit of clothes, sent him flying through the air to the palace, in the days of King Thunstone, the successor of Arthur. Every one flocked round to see him, and being carried to the king, he was asked who he was—whence he came—and where he lived ? Tom answered :—

“ My name is Tom Thumb,
From the fairies I’ve come.
When King Arthur shone,
His Court was my home.

• In me he delighted,
By him I was knighted ;

Did you never hear of Sir Thomas Thumb ? ”

The king was so charmed with this address that he ordered a little chair to be made, in order that Tom might sit upon his table, and also a palace of gold to live in, a

span high, with a door an inch wide. He also gave him a coach, drawn by six small mice.

The queen was so enraged at the honour paid to Sir Thomas that she resolved to ruin him, and told the king that the little knight had been saucy to her.

The king sent for Tom in great haste, but being fully aware of the danger of royal anger, he crept into an empty snail-shell, where he lay for a long time, until he was almost starved with hunger ; but at last he ventured to peep out, and seeing a fine large butterfly on the ground, near his hiding-place, he approached very cautiously, and getting himself placed astride on it, was immediately carried up into the air. The butterfly flew with him from tree to tree and from field to field, and at last returned to the Court, where the king and nobility all strove to catch him ; but at last poor Tom fell from his seat into a watering-pot, in which he was almost drowned.

When the queen saw him she was in a rage, and said he should be beheaded ; and he was again put into a mouse-trap until the time of his execution.

However, a cat, observing something alive in the trap, patted it about till the wires broke, which set Tom at liberty.

The king received Tom again into favour, which he did not live to enjoy, for a large spider one day attacked him ; and although he drew his sword and fought well, yet the spider's poisonous breath at last overcame him ;

“ He fell dead on the ground where he stood,
And the spider suck'd every drop of his blood.”

King Thunstone and his Court were so sorry at the loss of their little favourite that they went into mourning and raised a fine white marble monument over his grave.

THE IMP TREE

ONCE there was a King of Winchester called Orfeo, and dearly he loved his queen, Heurodis. She happened one hot afternoon in summer-time to be walking in the orchard, when she became very drowsy ; and she lay down under an imp tree,¹ and there she fell fast asleep. While she slept, she had a strange dream. She dreamt that two fair knights came to her side, and bade her come quickly with them to speak to their lord and king. But she answered them right boldly, that she neither dared nor cared to go with them. So the two knights went away ; but very quickly they returned, bringing their king with them, and a thousand knights in his train, and many beauteous ladies drest in pure white, riding on snow-white steeds. The king had a crown on his head, not of silver or red-gold, but all of precious stones that shone like the sun. By his side was led a lady's white palfrey that seemed to be prepared for some rider, for its saddle was empty. He commanded that Heurodis should be placed upon this white steed, and thereupon the King of Faërie and his train of knights and white dames, and Heurodis beside him, rode off through a fair country with many flowery meads, fields, forests, and pleasant waters, where stood castles and towers amid the green trees. Fairest of all, on a green terrace overlooking many orchards and rose-gardens, stood the Faërie King's palace. When he had shown these things to

¹ The " Imp Tree " is not, as you might suppose, a tree of the imps, but a tree on which a branch of another tree has been " impeded " or grafted.



[See p. 34]

She dreamt that two fair knights came to her side.

Heurodis, he brought her back safe to the Imp Tree ; but he bade her, on pain of death, meet him under the same tree on the morrow.

Orfeo, when told the dream, resolved that on the morrow he and a thousand knights should stand armed round the Imp Tree to protect her from the Faërie King. And when the time came, there they stood like a ring of living steel or a hedge of spears, to guard Heurodis. But in spite of all, she was snatched away under their very eyes ; and in vain were all their efforts to see which way she and her faerie captors were gone.

Orfeo made search for his lost queen everywhere during many days, but no footstep of her was to be found in upper earth. And then in sorrow for her, and in utter despair, he left his palace at Winchester, gave up his throne, and went into the wilderness, carrying only a harp for companion. With its tunes, as he sang to it, sorrowing for Heurodis, the wild beasts were enchanted and often came round about him—yea, wolf and fox, bear and little squirrel—to hear him play. And there in the forest, Orfeo (as the old story-book says) :—

“ Often in hot undertides ¹
Would see the Faërie King besides,
The King of Faërie with his rout
Hunt and ride all roundabout,
With calls and elfin-horns that blew,
And hounds that did reply thereto,
But never pulled down hart or doe,
And never arrow left the bow.”

And sometimes he saw the Faërie Host pass, as if to war, the knights with their swords drawn, stout and fierce of

¹ Afternoons.

face, and their banners flying. Other times he saw these faërie knights and ladies dance, dressed like guisers, with tabors beating and joyous trumpets blowing. And one day Orfeo saw sixty lovely ladies ride out to the riverside for falconry, each with her falcon on her bare hand, and in the very midst of them (oh wonder !) rode his lost queen, Heurodis. He determined at once to follow them ; and after flying their falcons they return through the forest at evening to a wild rocky place, where they ride into the rock through a rude cleft, overhung with brambles. They ride in, a league and more, till they come to the fairest country ever seen, where it is high midsummer and broad sunlight. In its midst stands a palace of an hundred towers, with walls of crystal, and windows coped and arched with gold. All that land was light, because when the night should come, the precious stones in the palace walls gave out a light as bright as noonday. Into this palace hall Orfeo entered, in the train of the ladies, and saw there the King of Faërie on his throne. The king was enraged at first when he saw the strange man enter with his harp. But Orfeo offers to play upon it, and Heurodis, when she hears, is filled with longing, while the Faërie King is so enchanted that he promises to Orfeo any gift he likes to ask out of all the riches of the faerie regions. But Orfeo, to this, has only one word to reply : " HEURODIS ! "

The King of Faërie thereupon gives her back to Orfeo, and they return in great joy, hand in hand together, through the wilderness to Winchester, where they live and reign together for ever afterwards in peace and happiness. But let none who would not be carried away like Heurodis to the Faërie King's country dare to sleep in the undertide beneath the Imp Tree.



ONCE upon a time there were Three Bears, who lived together in a house of their own, in a wood. One of them was a Little, Small, Wee Bear ; and one was a Middle-sized Bear ; and the other was a Great, Huge Bear. They had each a pot for their porridge ; a little pot for the Little, Small, Wee Bear ; and a middle-sized pot for the Middle Bear ; and a great pot for the Great, Huge Bear. And they had each a chair to sit in ; a little chair for the Little, Small, Wee Bear ; and a middle-sized chair for the Middle Bear ; and a great chair for the Great, Huge Bear. And they had each a bed to sleep in ; a little bed for the Little, Small, Wee Bear ; and a middle-

sized bed for the Middle Bear ; and a great bed for the Great, Huge Bear.

One day, after they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots, they walked out into the wood while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths by beginning too soon to eat it. And while they were walking, a little old Woman came to the house. She could not have been a good, honest old Woman ; for first she looked in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole ; and seeing nobody in the house, she lifted the latch. The door was not fastened, because the Bears were good Bears, who did nobody any harm, and never suspected that anybody would harm them. So the little old Woman opened the door, and went in ; and well pleased she was when she saw the porridge on the table. If she had been a good little old Woman, she would have waited till the Bears came home ; and then, perhaps, they would have asked her to breakfast ; for they were good Bears,—a little rough or so, as the manners of Bears are, but for all that very good-natured and hospitable. But she was an impudent, bad old Woman, and set about helping herself.

So first she tasted the porridge of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hot for her ; and she said a bad word about that. And then she tasted the porridge of the Middle Bear, and that was too cold for her ; and she said a bad word about that too. And then she went to the porridge of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and tasted that ; and that was neither too hot, nor too cold, but just right ; and she liked it so well that she ate it all up : but the naughty old Woman said a bad word about the little porridge-pot, because it did not hold enough for her.

Then the little old Woman sate down in the chair of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hard for her. And then she sate down in the chair of the Middle Bear, and that was too soft for her. And then she sate down in the chair of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too hard, not too soft, but just right. So she seated herself in it, and there she sate till the bottom of the chair came out, and down came she plump upon the ground. And the naughty old Woman said a wicked word about that too.

Then the little old Woman went upstairs into the bed-chamber in which the three Bears slept. And first she lay down upon the bed of the Great, Huge Bear ; but that was too high at the head for her. And next she lay down upon the bed of the Middle Bear ; and that was too high at the foot for her. And then she lay down upon the bed of the Little, Small, Wee Bear ; and that was neither too high at the head, nor at the foot, but just right. So she covered herself up comfortably and fell fast asleep.

By this time the three Bears thought their porridge would be cool enough ; so they came home to breakfast. Now the little old Woman had left the spoon of the Great, Huge Bear standing in his porridge.

"Somebody has been at my porridge!"

said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice. And when the Middle Bear looked at his, he saw that the spoon was standing in it too. They were wooden spoons ; if they had been silver ones, the naughty old Woman would have put them in her pocket.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE!"

said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

Then the Little, Small, Wee Bear looked at his, and there was the spoon in the porridge-pot, but the porridge was all gone.

"Somebody has been at my porridge, and has eaten it all up!" said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Upon this the Three Bears, seeing that some one had entered their house, and eaten up the Little, Small, Wee Bear's breakfast, began to look about them. Now the little old Woman had not put the hard cushion straight when she rose from the chair of the Great, Huge Bear.

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair!" said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the little old Woman had squatted down the soft cushion of the Middle Bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR!" said the Middle Bear in his middle voice.

And you know what the little old woman had done to the third chair.

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair, and has sate the bottom of it out!"

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Then the Three Bears thought it necessary that they should make farther search; so they went upstairs into their bed-chamber. Now the little old Woman had pulled the pillow of the Great, Huge Bear out of its place.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed!" said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And the little old Woman had pulled the bolster of the Middle Bear out of its place.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED !"

said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And when the Little, Small, Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its place ; and the pillow in its place upon the bolster ; and upon the pillow was the little old Woman's ugly, dirty head,—which was not in its place, for she had no business there.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed, and here she is !"

said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

The little old Woman had heard in her sleep the great, rough, gruff voice of the Great, Huge Bear ; but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind, or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle voice of the Middle Bear, but it was only as if she had heard some one speaking in a dream. But when she heard the Little, Small, Wee Bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once. Up she started ; and when she saw the Three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled herself out at the other, and ran to the window. Now the window was open, because the Bears, like good, tidy Bears, as they were, always opened their bed-chamber window when they got up in the morning. Out the little old Woman jumped ; and whether she broke her neck in the fall ; or ran into the wood and was lost there ; or found her way out of the wood, and was taken up by the constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was, I cannot tell. But the Three Bears never saw anything more of her.

"TOM TIT TOT"

ONCE upon a time there were a woman, and she baked five pies. And when they come out of the oven, they was that overbaked the crust were too hard to eat. So she says to her darter,—

"Maw'r,"¹ says she, "put you them there pies on the shelf, an' leave 'em there a little, an' they'll come again."—She meant, you know, the crust would get soft.

But the gal, she says to herself: "Well, if they'll come agin, I'll ate 'em now." And she set to work and ate 'em all, first and last.

Well, come supper-time, the woman she said: "Goo you, and git one o' them there pies. I dare say they've come agin now."

The gal she went an' she looked, and there warn't nothin' but the dishes. So back she come and says she: "Noo, they ain't come agin."

"Not none on 'em?" says the mother.

"Not none on 'em," says she.

"Well, come agin, or not come agin," says the woman, "I'll ha' one for supper."

"But you can't, if they ain't come," says the gal.

"But I can," says she. "Goo you and bring the best of 'em."

"Best or worst," says the gal, "I've ate 'em all, and you can't ha' one till that's come agin."

¹ Lass, girl.

. Well, the woman she were wholly bate,¹ and she took her spinnin' to the door to spin, and as she span she sang:—

" My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day.
My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day."

The king he were a-comin' down the street, an' he heard her sing, but what she sang he couldn't hear, so he stopped and said,—

" What were that you was a-singing of, maw'r ? "

The woman she were ashamed to let him hear what her darter had been a-doin', so she sang, 'stids² o' that :—

" My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day.
My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day."

" S'ars o' mine ! " said the king, " I never heerd tell of any one as could do that."

Then he said : " Look you here, I want a wife, and I'll marry your darter. But look you here," says he, " 'leven months out o' the year she shall have all the vittles she likes to eat, and all the gowns she likes to get, and all the company she likes to have ; but the last month o' the year she'll ha' to spin five skeins every day, an' if she doon't, I shall kill her."

" All right," says the woman ; for she thought what a grand marriage that was. And as for them five skeins, when it came to the time, there'd be plenty o' ways of getting out of it, and likeliest, he'd ha' forgot about it.

Well, so they was married. An' for 'leven months the gal had all the vittles she liked to ate, and all the gowns she liked to get, and all the company she liked to have.

But when the time was gettin' oover, she began to think

¹ Beaten.

² Instead.

about them there skeins an' to wonder if he had 'em in mind. But not one word did he say about 'em, an' she wholly thought he'd forgot 'em.

But the last day o' the last month he takes her to a room she'd never sets eyes on afore. There worn't nothing in it but a spinnin'-wheel and a stool. An' says he : " Now, my dear, here yow'll be shut in to-morrow with some vittles and some flax, and if you hain't spun five skeins by the night, your head will goo off."

An' awa' he went about his business.

Well, she were that frightened, she'd allus been such a useless mawther, that she didn't so much as know how to spin, an' what were she to do to-morrow, with no one to come nigh her to help her. She sat down on a stool in the kitchen, and lawk ! how she did cry !

However, all on a sudden she heard a sort of a knockin' low down on the door. She upped and oped it, an' what should she see but a small little black thing with a long tail. That looked up at her right curious, an' that said,—

" What are you crying for ? "

" What's that to you ? " says she.

" Never you mind," that said, " but tell me what you're a-cryin' for."

" That won't do me no good if I do," says she.

" You don't know that," that said, an' twirled that's tail round.

" Well," says she, " that won't do no harm, if that don't do no good," and she upped and told about the pies and the skeins, and everything.

" This is what I'll do," says the little black thing, " I'll come to your window every morning and take the flax and bring it spun at night."

"What's your pay?" says she.

That looked out o' the corner o' that's eyes, and that said: "I'll give you three guesses every night to guess my name, an' if you hain't guessed it afore the month's up, you shall be mine."

Well, she thought she'd be sure to guess that's name afore the month was up. "All right," says she, "I agree."

"All right," that says, an' lawk! how that twirled that's tail.

Well, the next day, the king he took her into the room, an' there was the flax an' the day's vittles.

"Now there's the flax," says he, "an' if that ain't spun up this night, off goes your head." An' then he went out an' locked the door.

He'd hardly gone when there was a knockin' on the window.

She upped and she oped it, and there sure enough was the little old thing a-settin' on the ledge.

"Where's the flax?" says he.

"Here it be," says she. And she gonned ¹ it to him.

Well, in the evening a knockin' came again to the window. She upped and she oped it, and there were the little old thing with five skeins of flax on his arm.

"Here te be," says he, and he gonned it to her.

"Now, what's my name?" says he.

"What, is that Bill?" says she.

"Noo, that ain't," says he, an' he twirled his tail.

"Is that Ned?" says she.

"Noo, that ain't," says he, an' he twirled his tail.

"Well, is that Mark?" says she.

¹ Gave.

"Noo, that ain't," says he, an' he twirled his tail harder an' away he flew.

Well, when her husband he come in, there was the five skeins ready for him. "I see I sha'n't have for to kill you to-night, my dear," says he; "you'll have your vittles and your flax in the mornin'," says he, an' away he goes.

Well, every day the flax an' the vittles they was brought, an' every day that there little black impet used for to come mornings and evenings. An' all the day the mawther she set a-trying for to think of names to say to it when it come at night. But she never hit on the right one. An' as it got towards the end o' the month, the impet that began for to look so malicious, an' that twirled that's tail faster an' faster each time she gave a guess.

At last it came to the last day but one. The impet that came at night along o' the five skeins, and that said,—

"What, ain't you got my name yet?"

"Is that Nicodemus?" says she.

"Noo, t'ain't," that says.

"Is that Sammlle?" says she.

"Noo, t'ain't," that says.

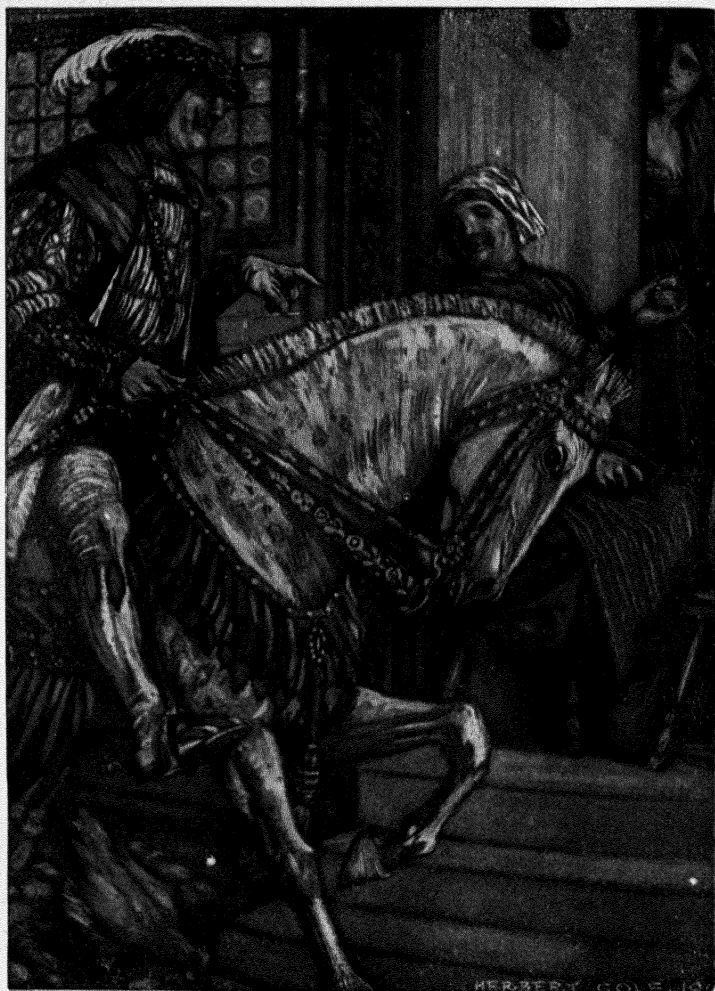
"A-well, is that Methusalem?" says she.

"Noo, t'ain't that neither," that says.

Then that looks at her with that's eyes like a coal o' fire, an' that says: "Woman, there's only to-morrow night, an' then you'll be mine!" An' away it flew.

Well, she felt that horrid. Howsomever, she heard the king a-comin' along the passage. In he came, an' when he see the five skeins, he says, says he,—

"Well, my dear," says he, "I don't see but what you'll have your skeins ready to-morrow night as well, an' as I reckon I sha'n't have to kill you, I'll have supper in here



"My darter spun five skeins to-day."

[See p. 43]

" Well, is that Zebedee ? " says she again.

" Noo, t'ain't," says the impet. An' then that laughed an' twirled that's tail till you couldn't hardly see it.

" Take time, woman," that says ; " next guess, and you're mine." An' that stretched out that's black hands at her.

Well, she backed a step or two, an' she looked at it, and then she laughed out, and says she, a-pointin' of her finger at it :—

" Nimmy Nimmy Not,
Yar name's TOM TIT TOT."

Well, when that heard her, that shrieked awful and away that flew into the dark, and she never saw it no more.



∞ THE LAMBTON WORM ∞

LONG, long ago,—I cannot say how long,—the young heir of Lambton Castle led a careless, profane life, regardless of God and man. All his Saturday nights he spent in drinking, and all his Sunday mornings in fishing. One Sunday he had cast his line into the Water of Wear many times without a bite; and at last in a rage he let loose his tongue in curses loud and deep, to the great scandal of the servants and country-folk as they passed by to the old chapel at Brugeford, which was not in ruins then.

Soon afterwards he felt something tugging at his line, and trusting he had at last hooked a fine fish, he used all his skill to play it and bring it safe to land. But what were

his horror and dismay on finding that instead of a fish, he had only caught a loathly worm of most evil appearance ! He hastily tore the foul thing from his hook and flung it into a well close by, which is still known by the name of the Worm Well.

The young heir had scarcely thrown his line again into the stream when a stranger of venerable appearance, passing by, asked him what sport he had met with.

He replied : " Why, truly, I think I have caught the evil one himself. Look in and judge."

The stranger looked, and remarked that he had never seen the like of it before ; that it resembled an eel, only it had nine holes on each side of its mouth ; and, finally, that he thought it boded no good.

The worm remained there unheeded in the well till it outgrew so confined a dwelling-place. It then emerged, and betook itself by day to the river, where it lay coiled round a rock in the middle of the stream, and by night to a neighbouring hill, round whose base it would twine itself, while it continued to grow so fast that it soon could encircle the hill three times. This eminence is still called the Worm Hill. It is oval in shape, on the north side of the Wear, and about a mile and a half from old Lambton Hall.

The Lambton Worm now became the terror of the whole country side. ' It sucked the cows' milk, worried the cattle, devoured the lambs, and committed every sort of depredation on the helpless peasantry. Having laid waste the district on the north side of the river, it crossed the stream and approached Lambton Hall, where the old lord was living alone and desolate. His son had repented of his evil life, and had gone to the wars in a distant country.

Some people say he had gone as a crusader to the Holy Land.

On hearing of the dreaded Worm's approach, the terrified household assembled in council. Much was said, but to little purpose, till the steward, a man of age and experience, advised that the large trough which stood in the courtyard should immediately be filled with milk. This was done without delay ; the monster approached, drank the milk, and without doing further harm, returned across the Wear to wrap his giant form around his favourite hill. The next day he was seen recrossing the river ; the trough was hastily filled again, and with the same results. It was found that the milk of " nine kye " was needed to fill the trough ; and if this quantity was not placed there every day, regularly and in full measure, the Worm would break out into a violent rage, lashing its tail round the trees in the park, and tearing them up by the roots.

The Lambton Worm was now, in fact, the terror of the whole country. Many a knight had come out to fight with it, but all to no purpose ; for it possessed the marvellous power of reuniting itself after being cut asunder, and thus was more than a match for all the knighthood of the North. So after many a vain conflict, and the loss of many a brave man, the creature was left in possession of its favourite hill.

After seven long years, however, the heir of Lambton returned home, to find the broad lands of his ancestors waste and desolate, his people terror-stricken or in hiding, his father sinking into the grave overwhelmed with care and anxiety. He took no rest, we are told, till he had crossed the river and surveyed the Worm as it lay coiled round the foot of the Worm Hill ; then hearing how every

other knight and man-at-arms had failed, he took counsel in the matter from the Wise-woman of Chester-le-Street.

At first the Wise-woman of Chester-le-Street did nothing but upbraid him for having brought this scourge upon his house and neighbourhood ; but when she saw that he was indeed penitent, and eager at any cost to remove the evil he had caused, she bade him get his best suit of mail studded thickly with spear-heads ; to put it on, and thus armed to take his stand on the rock in the middle of the river Wear. There he must meet the Worm face to face, trusting the issue to Providence and his good sword. But she charged him before going to the encounter to take a vow, that if successful, he would slay the first living thing that met him on his way homewards. Should he fail to fulfil this vow, she warned him that for nine generations no lord of Lambton would die in his bed.

The heir, now a belted knight, made the vow in Brugeford Chapel. He studded his armour back and breast-plate, greaves and armlets, with the sharpest spear-heads, and unsheathing his trusty sword took his stand on the rock in the middle of the Wear. At the accustomed hour the Worm uncoiled its "snaky twine," and wound its way towards the hall, crossing the river close by the rock on which the knight was standing eager for the combat. He struck a violent blow upon the monster's head as it passed, on which the creature turned on him, and writhing and lashing the water in its rage, flung its tail round him, as if to strangle him in its coils.

But the closer the Worm wrapped him in its folds the more deadly were its self-inflicted wounds, till at last the river ran crimson with its blood. As its strength diminished the knight redoubled his strokes, and he was able at last

with his good sword to cut the serpent fold by fold, and piece by piece asunder ; each severed part was immediately borne away by the swiftness of the current, and the Worm, unable to reunite itself, was utterly destroyed.

During this long and terrible combat in the river, the household of Lambton had shut themselves within-doors to pray for their young lord, he having promised that when it was over he would, if conqueror, blow a blast on his bugle. This would assure his father of his safety, and warn them to let loose a favourite hound which they had destined as the victim, according to the Wise-woman's word and the young lord's vow. When, however, the bugle-notes were heard within the hall, the old lord of Lambton forgot everything but his son's safety, and rushing out of doors, ran to meet and embrace him.

The heir of Lambton felt his heart turn sick as he saw his old father come. What could he do ? He could not lift his hand against his beloved father ; yet how else could he fulfil his vow ? In his perplexity he blew another blast ; the hound was let loose, it bounded to its master ; the sword, yet reeking with the Lambton Worm's blood, was plunged into its heart. But it was all in vain. The vow was broken. What the Wise-woman of Chester-le-Street had foretold came true. The curse lay upon the house of Lambton for nine generations.

THE FAIRY HORN

ONCE upon a time a knight was riding in the country beyond Gloucester, and came to a forest abounding in boars, stags, and every kind of wild beast. Now in a grovy lawn of this forest there was a little mount, rising in a point to the height of a man, on which knights and other hunters were used to ascend when fatigued with heat and thirst, to seek some relief. The nature of the place—for it is a fairy place—is such that whoever ascends the mount must leave his companions, and go quite alone.

As the knight rode in the wood, and came nigh this fairy-knoll, he met with a wood-cutter and questioned him about it. He must go thither alone, the wood-cutter told him, and say, as if speaking to some other person :—" I thirst ! "

Immediately there would appear a cup-bearer in a rich crimson dress, with a shining face, bearing in his stretched-out hand a large horn, adorned with gold and gems, such as was the custom among the most ancient English. The cup was full of nectar, of an unknown but most delicious flavour, and when it was drunk, all heat and weariness fled from those who drank of it, so that they became ready to toil anew, instead of being tired from having toiled. Moreover, when the nectar was drunk, the cup-bearer offered a towel to the drinker, to wipe his mouth with, and then having done this, he waited neither for a silver penny for his services, nor for any question to be asked.

The knight laughed to himself y^hen he heard this.

"Who," thought he, "would be fool enough, having within his grasp such a drinking-horn, ever to let it go again from him!"

Later, that very same day, as he rode back hot and tired and thirsty from his hunting, he bethought him of the fairy-knoll and the fairy-horn. Sending away his followers, he repaired thither all alone, and did as the wood-cutter had told him. He ascended the little hill, and said in a bold voice:—"I thirst!"

Instantly there appeared, as the wood-cutter had foretold, a cup-bearer in a crimson dress, bearing in his hand a drinking-horn. The horn was richly beset with precious gems; and the knight was filled with envy at sight of it. No sooner had he seized upon it, and tasted of its delicious nectar, than he determined to make off with the horn. So, having gotten the horn, and drunk of it every drop, instead of returning it to the cup-bearer, as in good manners he should have done, he stepped down from the knoll, and rudely made off with it in his hand.

But learn what fate overtook this knight. The good Earl of Gloucester, standing on the fairy-knoll, when he heard that the wicked knight had destroyed the kind custom of the horn, attacked the robber in his stronghold, and forthright slew him, and carried off the horn. But alas! the earl did not return it to the fairy-cupbearer, but gave it to his master and lord, King Henry the Elder. Since then you may stand all day at the fairy-knoll, and many times cry "I thirst!" but you may not taste of the Fairy Horn.



Ploughman's Spikenard

THE PIXY FLOWER

ONCE upon a time there lived in Devonshire two serving damsels, called Molly and Sabina, who were very fond of ribands and finery. When their mistress scolded them for spending more money than they ought upon such things, they said the pixies were very kind to them, and would often drop silver for their pleasure into a bucket of fair water which they placed for the accommodation of those little beings in the chimney corner every night before they went to bed. Once, however, it was forgotten, and the pixies, finding themselves disappointed by an empty bucket, whisked upstairs to the maids' bedroom, popped through the keyhole, and began to exclaim aloud against the laziness and neglect of the damsels. Now Sabina, who lay awake and heard all this, jogged her fellow-servant, and proposed getting up immediately to put things straight. But Molly, lazy girl, who liked not being disturbed out of a comfortable nap, pettishly declared "that for her part, she would not stir out of bed to please all the pixies in Devonshire." The good-humoured Sabina, however, got up, filled the bucket, and was rewarded by a handful of silver pennies found in it the next morning. But long ere

that time had arrived, what was her alarm, as she crept towards the bed, to hear all the elves buzzing like so many angry bees, and consulting as to what should be done to the lazy, lazy lass who would not stir out of bed for their pleasure.

Some proposed "pinches, nips, and bobs," others wanted to spoil her new cherry-coloured bonnet and ribands. One talked of sending her the toothache, another of giving her a red nose ; but this last was voted much too bad a punishment for a pretty young lass. So tempering mercy with justice, the pixies were kind enough to let her off with a lame leg, which was to plague her for seven years, and was only to be cured by a certain herb growing on Dartmoor. Its long, and learned, and very queer and difficult name the elfin judge pronounced in a high and shrill voice. It was a name of seven syllables, seven being also the number of years decreed for Molly's lameness.

Sabina, good-natured maid, wishing to save her fellow-damsel so long a suffering, tried with might and main to bear in mind the name of this strange herb. She said it over and over again, tied a knot in her garter at every syllable as a help to memory, and thought she had the word just as safe and sure as her own name, and very possibly felt much more anxious about retaining the one than the other.

At length she dropped asleep, and did not wake till the morning. Now whether Sabina's head was like a sieve, that lets out as fast as it takes in, or if the over-exertion to remember only caused her to forget, cannot be determined ; but certain it is that when she opened her eyes she knew nothing at all about the matter excepting that Molly was to go lame on her right leg for seven long years,

unless a herb with a strange name could be got to cure her. And lame Molly went for nearly the whole of those seven years.

At length, about the end of that time, Sabina and Molly went out into the fields early one morning to pick mushrooms, when a merry, squint-eyed, queer-looking boy started up all of a sudden just as Molly went to pluck a fine big one and came tumbling, head over heels, towards her. He held in his hand a green herb with a tiny yellow flower, which some say was called *Inula-Helenium*¹ and he insisted upon striking Molly with it on the lame leg. From that very moment she got well, and lame Molly became the best dancer in the whole town when she and Sabina danced at the feast of Mayday on the green.

¹ Ploughman's Spikenard : Elecampane.

TOM · HICKATHRIFT

LONG before William the Conqueror, there dwelt a man in the Isle of Ely, named Thomas Hickathrift, a poor labouring man, but so strong that he was able to do in one day the ordinary work of two. He had an only son, whom he christened Thomas, after his own name. The old man put his son to good learning, but he would take none, for he was none of the wisest, but something soft, and had no docility at all in him. God calling this good man, the father, to his rest, his mother, being tender of him, kept him by her hard labour as well as she could ; but this was no easy matter, for Tom would sit all day in the chimney-corner, instead of doing anything to help her, and although at the time we are speaking of he was only ten years old, he would eat more than four or five ordinary men, and was five feet and a half in height, and two feet and a half broad. His hand was more like a shoulder of mutton than a boy's hand, and he was altogether like a little monster ; but yet his great strength was not known.

Tom's strength came to be known in this manner : his mother, it seems, as well as himself, for they lived in the days of merry old England, slept upon straw. Now being a tidy old creature, she must every now and then have a new bed, and one day having been promised a bottle of straw by a neighbouring farmer, after much begging, she got her son to fetch it. Tom, however, made her borrow a cart-rope first, before he would budge a step, without saying what he wanted, it for ; but the poor woman, too

glad to gain his help upon any terms, let him have it at once. Tom, swinging the rope round his shoulders, went to the farmer's, and found him with two men threshing in a barn. Having told what he wanted, the farmer said he might take as much straw as he could carry. Tom at once took him at his word, and, placing the rope in a right position, rapidly made up a bundle containing at least a cartload, the men jeering at him all the while. Their merriment, however, did not last long, for Tom flung the enormous bundle over his shoulders, and walked away with it without any difficulty, and left them all gaping after him.

After this exploit Tom was no longer allowed to be idle. Every one tried to secure his services, and we are told many tales of his mighty strength. On one occasion, having been offered as great a bundle of fire-wood as he could carry, he marched off with one of the largest trees in the forest. Tom was also extremely fond of attending fairs; and in cudgelling, wrestling, or throwing the hammer, there was no one who could compete with him. He thought nothing of flinging a huge hammer into the middle of a river a mile off, and in fact performed such extraordinary feats that the folk began to have a fear of him.

At length a brewer at Lynn, who required a strong lusty fellow to carry his beer to the Marsh and to Wisbeach, after much persuasion, and promising him a new suit of clothes, and as much as he liked to eat and drink, secured Tom for his business. The distance he daily travelled with the beer was upwards of twenty miles, for although there was a shorter cut through the Marsh, no one durst go that way for fear of a monstrous giant, who was lord of a portion of the district, and who killed or made slaves of every one he could lay his hands upon.

Now in the course of time, Tom was thoroughly tired of going such a roundabout way, and without telling his plans to any one, he resolved to pass through the giant's domain or lose his life in the attempt. This was a bold undertaking, but good living had so increased Tom's strength and courage, that venturesome as he was before, his hardness was so much increased that he would have faced a still greater danger. He accordingly drove his cart in the forbidden direction, flinging the gates wide open, as if for the purpose of making his daring more plain to be seen.

At length he was espied by the giant, who was in a rage at his boldness, but consoled himself by thinking that Tom and the beer would soon become his prey. "Sirrah," said the monster, "who gave you permission to come this way? Do you not know how I make all stand in fear of me? and you, like an impudent rogue, must come and fling my gates open at your pleasure! Are you careless of your life? Do not you care what you do? But I will make you an example for all rogues under the sun! Dost thou not see how many thousand heads hang upon yonder tree—heads of those who have offended against my laws? But thy head shall hang higher than all the rest for an example!" But Tom made him answer: "A dishclout in your teeth for your news, for you shall not find me to be one of them." "No!" said the giant, in astonishment and indignation, "and what a fool you must be if you come to fight with such a one as I am, and bring never a weapon to defend yourself!" Quoth Tom, "I have a weapon here that will make you know you are a traitorly rogue." This speech highly incensed the giant, who immediately ran to his cave for his club, intending to dash out Tom's brains at one blow.

Tom was now much distressed for a weapon, as by some chance he had forgot one, and he began to reflect how vëry little his whip would help him against a monster twelve feet in height and six feet round the waist. But while the giant was gone for his club, Tom bethought himself, and turning his cart upside down, adroitly takes out the axle-tree, which would serve him for a staff, and removing a wheel, fits it to his arm instead of a shield—very good weapons indeed in time of trouble, and worthy of Tom's wit. When the monster returned with his club, he was amazed to see the weapons with which Tom had armed himself ; but uttering a word of defiance, he bore down upon the poor fellow with such heavy strokes that it was as much as Tom could do to defend himself with his wheel. Tom, however, at length cut the giant a heavy blow with the axle-tree on the side of his head, that he nearly reeled over. "What !" said Tom, "have you drunk of my strong beer already ?" This inquiry did not, as we may suppose, mollify the giant, who laid on his blows so sharply and heavily that Tom was obliged to defend himself. By and by, not making any impression on the wheel, he got almost tired out, and was obliged to ask Tom if he would let him drink a little, and then he would fight again. "No," said Tom, "my mother did not teach me that wit : who would be fool then ?" The end may readily be imagined ; Tom having beaten the giant, cut off his head, and entered the cave, which he found completely filled with gold and silver.

The news of this victory rapidly spread throughout the country, for the giant had been a common enemy to the people about. They made bonfires for joy, and showed their respect to Tom by every means in their power. A

few days afterwards Tom took possession of the cave and all the giant's treasure. He pulled down the former, and built a magnificent house on the spot ; but as for the land stolen by the giant, part of it he gave to the poor for their common, merely keeping enough for himself and his good old mother, Jane Hickathrift.

Tom was now a great man and a hero with all the country folk, so that when any one was in danger or difficulty, it was to Tom Hickathrift he must turn. It chanced that about this time many idle and rebellious persons drew themselves together in and about the Isle of Ely, and set themselves to defy the king and all his men.

By this time, you must know, Tom Hickathrift had secured to himself a trusty friend and comrade, almost his equal in strength and courage, for though he was but a tinker, yet he was a great and lusty one. Now the sheriff of the county came to Tom, under cover of night, full of fear and trembling, and begged his aid and protection against the rebels, "else," said he, "we be all dead men!" Tom, nothing loth, called his friend the tinker, and as soon as it was day, led by the sheriff, they went out armed with their clubs to the place where the rebels were gathered together. When they were got thither, Tom and the tinker marched up to the leaders of the band, and asked them why they were set upon breaking the King's peace. To this they answered loudly, "Our will is our law, and by that alone we will be governed!" "Nay," quoth Tom, "if it be so, these trusty clubs are our weapons, and by them alone you shall be chastised." These words were no sooner uttered than they madly rushed on the throng of men, bearing all before them, and laying twenty or thirty sprawling with every blow. The tinker struck off heads with such

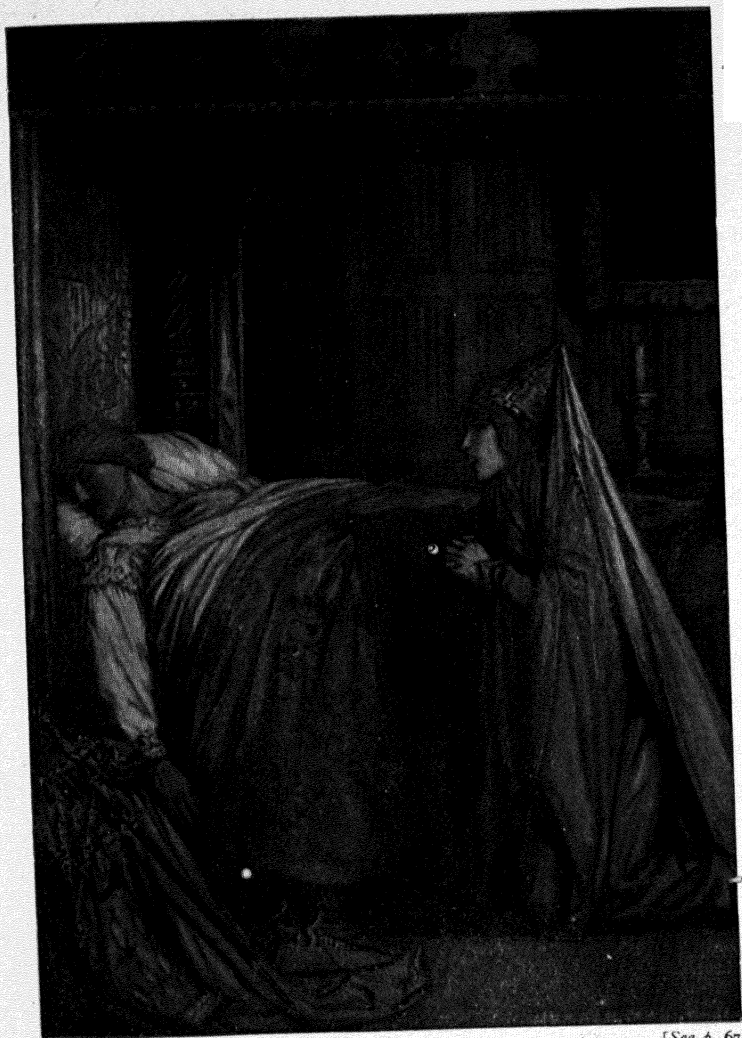
violence that they flew like balls for miles about, and when Tom had slain hundreds and so broken his trusty club, he laid hold of a lusty raw-boned miller and made use of him as a weapon till he had quite cleared the field.

If Tom Hickathrift had been a hero before, he was twice a hero now. When the king heard of it all, he sent for him to be knighted, and when he was Sir Thomas Hickathrift nothing would serve him but that he must be married to a great lady of the county.

So married he was, and a fine wedding they had of it. There was a great feast given, to which all the poor widows for miles round were invited, because of Tom's mother, and rich and poor feasted together. Among the poor widows who came was an old woman called Stumbelup, who with much ingratitude stole from the great table a silver tankard. But she had not got safe away before she was caught and the people were so enraged at her wickedness that they had nearly hanged her. However, Sir Tom had her rescued, and commanded that she should be drawn on a wheel-barrow through the streets and lanes of Cambridge, holding a placard in her hand on which was written :—

“ I am the naughty Stumbelup,
Who tried to steal the silver cup.”

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[See p. 67]

“Far hae I sought ye; near am I brought to ye,
Dear Duke o’ Norroway, will ye no turn and speak to me?”

THE BLACK BULL OF NORROWAY

ONCE upon a time there lived a king who had three daughters ; the two eldest were proud and ugly, but the youngest was the gentlest and most beautiful creature ever seen, and the pride not only of her father and mother, but of all in the land. As it fell out, the three princesses were talking one night of whom they would marry. " I will have no one lower than a king," said the eldest princess. The second would take a prince or a great duke even. " Pho, pho," said the youngest, laughing, " you are both so proud ; now, I would be content with the Black Bull o' Norroway." Well, they thought no more of the matter till the next morning, when, as they sat at breakfast, they heard the most dreadful bellowing at the door, and what should it be but the Black Bull come for his bride. You may be sure they were all terribly frightened at this, for the Black Bull was one of the most horrible creatures ever seen in the world. And the king and queen did not know how to save their daughter. At last they determined to send him off with the old henwife. So they put her on his back, and away he went with her till he came to a great black forest, when, throwing her down, he returned roaring louder and more frightfully than ever. They then sent, one by one, all the servants, then the two eldest princesses ; but not one of them met with any better treatment than the old henwife, and at last they were forced to send their youngest and favourite child.

Far she travelled upon the Black Bull, through many dreadful forests and lonely wastes, till they came at last to a noble castle, where a large company was assembled. The lord of the castle pressed them to stay, though much he wondered at the lovely princess and her strange companion. But as they went in among the guests, the princess espied a pin sticking in the Black Bull's hide, which she pulled out, and, to the surprise of all, there appeared not a frightful wild beast, but one of the most beautiful princes ever beheld.

You may believe how delighted the princess was to see him fall at her feet, and thank her for breaking his cruel enchantment. There were great rejoicings in the castle at this, but alas ! in the midst of them he suddenly disappeared, and though every place was sought, he was nowhere to be found.

The princess, from being filled with happiness, was all but broken-hearted. She determined, however, to seek through all the world for him, and many weary ways she went, but for a long, long while nothing could she hear of her lover. Travelling once through a dark wood she lost her way, and as night was coming on she thought she must now certainly die of cold and hunger ; but seeing a light through the trees, she went on till she came to a little hut where an old woman lived, who took her in and gave her both food and shelter. In the morning the old wife gave her three nuts, that she was not to break till her heart was " like to break and owre again like to break " ; so showing her the way, she bade God speed her, and the princess once more set out on her wearisome journey.

She had not gone far when a company of lords and ladies rode past her, all talking merrily of the fine doings they

expected at the Duke o' Norroway's wedding. Then she came up to a number of people carrying all sorts of fine things, and they, too, were going to the duke's wedding. At last she came to a castle, where nothing was to be seen but cooks and bakers, some running one way, and some another, and all so busy that they did not know what to do first. Whilst she was looking at all this, she heard a noise of hunters behind her, and some one cried out :—

“ Make way for the Duke o' Norroway ! ”

And who should ride past but the prince and a beautiful lady.

You may be sure her heart was now “ like to break and owre again like to break ” at this sad sight, so she broke one of the nuts, and out came a wee wifie carding wool. The princess then went into the castle, and asked to see the lady, who no sooner saw the wee wifie so hard at work than she offered the princess anything in her castle for it.

“ I will give it to you,” said she, “ only on condition that you put off for one day your marriage with the Duke o' Norroway, and that I may go into his room alone to-night.”

So anxious was the lady for the nut that she consented. And when dark night was come, and the duke fast asleep, the princess was put alone into his chamber. Sitting down by his bedside she began singing :—

• “ Far hae I sought ye, near am I brought to ye,
Dear Duke o' Norroway, will ye no turn and speak to
me ? ”

Though she sang this over and over again, the duke never wakened, and in the morning the princess had to leave him, without his knowing she had ever been there. She then

broke the second nut, and out came a wee wifie spinning, which so delighted the lady that she readily agreed to put off her marriage another day for it ; but the princess came no better speed the second night than the first, and, almost in despair, she broke the last nut, which contained a wee wifie reeling, and on the same condition as before, the lady got possession of it.

When the duke was dressing in the morning his man asked him what the strange singing and moaning that had been heard in his room for two nights meant.

" I heard nothing," said the duke ; " it could only have been your fancy."

" Take no sleeping-draught to-night, and be sure to lay aside your pillow of heaviness," said the man, " and you also will hear what for two nights has kept me awake."

The duke did so, and the princess coming in, sat down sighing at his bedside, thinking this the last time she might ever see him. The duke started up when he heard the voice of his dearly-loved princess ; and with many endearing expressions of surprise and joy, explained to her that he had long been in the power of a witch-wife, whose spells over him were now happily ended by their once again meeting.

The princess, happy to be the means of breaking his second evil spell, consented to marry him, and the wicked witch-wife, who fled that country afraid of the duke's anger, has never since been heard of. All was hurry and preparation in the castle, and the marriage which took place happily ended the adventures of the Black Bull o' Norroway, and the wanderings of the king's daughter.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

I

WHEN Arthur was King of Britain, and so reigned, it befell one winter-tide he held at Camelot his Christmas feast, with all the knights of the Round Table, full fifteen days. All was joy then in hall and chamber ; and when the New Year came it was kept with great joy. Rich gifts were given and many lords and ladies took their seats at the table, where Queen Guenever sat at the king's side, and a lady fairer of form might no one say he had ever before seen. But King Arthur would not eat nor would he long sit until he should have witnessed some wondrous adventure. The first course was served with a blowing of trumpets, and before each two guests were set twelve dishes, and bright wine, for there was no want of anything.

Scarcely had the first course commenced, when there rushed in at the hall-door a knight,—the tallest on earth he must have been. His back and breast were broad, but his waist was small. He was clothed entirely in green, and his spurs were of bright gold ; his saddle was embroidered with birds and flies, and the steed that he rode upon was green. Gaily was the knight attired ; his great beard, like a green bush, hung on his breast. His horse's mane was decked with golden threads, and its tail bound with a green band ; such a horse and such a knight were never before seen. It seemed that no man might endure the Green Knight's blows, but he carried neither spear nor shield.

In one hand he held a holly bough, and in the other an axe the edge of which was as keen as a sharp razor, and the handle was encased in iron, curiously graven with green.

Thus arrayed, the Green Knight entered the hall, without saluting any one; and asked for the governor of the company, and looked about him for the most renowned of them. Much they marvelled to see a man and a horse as green as grass; never before had they seen such a sight as this; they were afraid to answer, and were as silent as if sleep had taken hold of them, some from fear, others from courtesy. King Arthur, who was never afraid, saluted the Green Knight and bade him welcome. The Green Knight said that he would not tarry; he was seeking the most valiant, that he might prove him. He came in peace; but he had a halberd at home and a helmet too. King Arthur assured him that he should not fail to find an opponent worthy of him.

"I seek no fight," said the knight; "here are only beardless children; here is no man to match me; still, if any be bold enough to strike a stroke for another, this axe shall be his, but I shall give him a stroke in return within a twelvemonth and a day!"

Fear kept all silent; while the knight rolled his red eyes about and bent his gristly green brows. Waving his beard awhile, he exclaimed,—

"What, then! is this Arthur's Court? Forsooth, the renown of the Round Table is overturned with a word of one man's speech!"

Arthur grew red for shame, and waxed as wroth as the wind. He assured the knight that no one was afraid of his great words, and seized the axe. The Green Knight,

stroking his beard, awaited the blow, and with a dry countenance drew down his green coat.

But thereupon Sir Gawayne begged the king to let him undertake the blow; he asked permission to leave the table, saying it was not meet that Arthur should take the game while so many bold knights sat upon bench. Although the weakest he was quite ready to meet the Green Knight. The other knights too begged Arthur to "give Gawayne the game." Then the king gave Gawayne, who was his nephew, his weapon and told him to keep heart and hand steady. The Green Knight inquired the name of his opponent, and Sir Gawayne told him his name, declaring that he was willing to give and receive a blow.

"It pleases me well, Sir Gawayne," says the Green Knight, "that I shall receive a blow from thy fist; but thou must swear that thou wilt seek me to receive the blow in return."

"Where shall I seek thee?" says Sir Gawayne; "tell me thy name and thy abode and I will find thee."

"When thou hast smitten me," says the Green Knight, "then tell I thee of my home and name; if I speak not at all, so much the better for thee. Take now thy grim weapon and let us see how thou strikest?"

"Gladly, sir, forsooth," quoth Sir Gawayne.

And now the Green Knight puts his long, green locks aside, and lays bare his neck, and Sir Gawayne strikes hard with the axe, and at one blow severs the head from the body. The head falls to the earth, and many treat it roughly, but the Green Knight never falters; he starts up, seizes his head, steps into the saddle, holding the while the head in his hand by the hair, and turns his horse about.

Then lo ! the head lifts up its eyelids, and addresses Sir Gawayne :—

“ Look thou, be ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek till thou findest me. Get thee to the Green Chapel, there to receive a blow on New Year’s morn ; fail thou never ; come, or recreant be called.” So saying, the Green Knight rides out of the hall, his head in his hand.

And now Arthur addresses the queen : “ Dear dame, be not dismayed ; such marvels well become the Christmas festival ; I may now go to meat. Sir Gawayne, hang up thine axe.” The king and his knights sit feasting at the board, with all manner of meat and minstrelsy, till day is ended.

“ But beware, Sir Gawayne ! ” said the king at its end, “ lest thou fail to seek the adventure which thou hast taken in hand ! ”

II

LIKE other years, the months and seasons of this year pass away full quickly and never return. After Christmas comes Lent, and spring sets in, and warm showers descend. Then the groves become green ; and birds build and sing for joy of the summer that follows ; blossoms begin to bloom, and noble notes are heard in the woods. With the soft winds of summer, more beautiful grow the flowers, wet with dew-drops. But then harvest approaches and drives the dust about, and the leaves drop off the trees, the grass becomes grey, and all ripens and rots. At last, when the winter winds come round again, Sir Gawayne thinks of his dread journey and his vow to the Green Knight.

On All-Hallow’s Day, Arthur makes a feast for his

nephew's sake. After meat, Sir Gawayne thus speaks to his uncle : " Now, liege lord, I ask leave of you, for I am bound on the morrow to seek the Green Knight."

Many noble knights, the best of the Court, counsel and comfort him, and much sorrow prevails in the hall, but Gawayne declares that he has nothing to fear. On the morn he asks for his arms ; a carpet is spread on the floor, and he steps thereon. He is dubbed in a doublet of Tarsic silk, and a well-made hood ; they set steel shoes on his feet, lap his legs in steel greaves ; put on the steel habergeon, the well-burnished braces, elbow pieces, and gloves of plate : while over all is placed the coat armour. His spurs are then fixed, and his sword is attached to his side by a silken girdle. Thus attired the knight hears mass, and afterwards takes leave of Arthur and his Court. By that time his horse Gringolet was ready, the harness of which glittered like the gleam of the sun. Then Sir Gawayne sets his helmet upon his head, and the circle around it was decked with diamonds ; and they give him his shield with the " pentangle " of pure gold, devised by King Solomon as a token of truth ; for it is called the endless knot, and well becomes the good Sir Gawayne, a knight the truest of speech and the fairest of form. He was found faultless in his five wits ; the image of the Virgin was depicted upon his shield : in courtesy he was never found wanting, and therefore was the endless knot fastened on his shield.

And now Sir Gawayne seizes his lance and bids all " Good-day " ; he spurs his horse and goes on his way. All that saw him go mourned in their hearts, and declared that his equal was not to be found upon earth. It would have been better for him to have been a leader of men, than to die by the hands of an elvish man.

Meanwhile, many a weary mile goes Sir Gawayne ; now rides the knight through the realms of England ; he has no companion but his horse, and no men does he see till he approaches North Wales. From Holyhead he passes into Wirral, where he finds but few that love God or man ; he inquires after the Green Knight of the Green Chapel, but can gain no tidings of him. His cheer oft changed before he found the chapel ; many a cliff he climbed over, many a ford and stream he crossed, and everywhere he found a foe. It were too tedious to tell the tenth part of his adventures with serpents, wolves, and wild men ; with bulls, bears, and boars. Had he not been both brave and good, doubtless he had been dead ; the sharp winter was far worse than any war that ever troubled him. Thus in peril he travels till Christmas Eve and on the morn he finds himself in a deep forest, where were old oaks many a hundred, and many sad birds upon bare twigs piped piteously for the cold. Through rough ways and deep mire he goes, that he may celebrate the birth of Christ and blessing himself he says, " Cross of Christ, speed me ! "

Scarcely had he blessed himself thrice, than he saw a dwelling in the wood, set on a hill, the comeliest castle that knight ever owned, which shone as the sun through the bright oaks.

Forthwith Sir Gawayne goes to the chief gate, and finds the drawbridge raised, and the gates fast shut ; as he abides there on the bank, he observes the high walls of hard hewn stone, with battlements and towers and chalk-white chimneys ; and bright and great were its round towers with their well-made capitals. Oh, thinks he, if only he might come within the cloister. Anon he calls, and soon there comes a porter to know the knight's errand.

"Good sir," says Gawayne, "ask the high lord of this house to grant me a lodging."

"You are welcome to dwell here as long as you like," replied the porter. Thereupon is the drawbridge let down, and the gate opened wide to receive him; and he enters and his horse is well stabled, and knights and squires bring Gawayne into the hall. Many a one hastens to take his helmet and sword; the lord of the castle bids him welcome and they embrace each other. Gawayne looks on his host; a big bold one he seemed; beaver-hued was his broad beard, and his face as fell as the fire.

The lord then leads Gawayne to a chamber, and assigns a page to wait upon him. In this bright bower was noble bedding; the curtains were of pure silk with golden hems, and Tarsic tapestries covered the walls and floor. Here the knight doffed his armour, and put on rich robes, which well became him: and in troth a more comely knight than Sir Gawayne was never seen.

Then a chair was placed by the fireplace for him, and a mantle of fine linen, richly embroidered, thrown over him; a table, too, was brought in, and the knight, having washed, was invited to sit to meat. He was served with numerous dishes, with fish baked and broiled, or boiled and seasoned with spices; full noble feast, and much mirth did he make as he ate and drank.

Then Sir Gawayne, in answer to his host, told him he was of Arthur's Court; and when this was made known great was the joy in the hall. Each one said softly to his mate: "Now we shall see courteous manners and hear noble speech, for we have amongst us the father of all nurture."

After dinner the company go to the chapel to hear the

evensong of the great season. The lord of the castle and Sir Gawayne sit together during the service. When his wife, accompanied by her maids, left her seat after the service, she appeared even fairer than Guenever. An older dame led her by the hand, and very unlike they were ; for if the young one was fair, the other was yellow, and had rough and wrinkled cheeks. The younger had a throat fairer than snow ; the elder had black brows and bleared lips. With permission of the lord, Sir Gawayne salutes the elder, and the younger courteously kisses, and begs to be her servant. To the great hall then they go, where spices and wine are served : the lord takes off his hood and places it on a spear : he who makes most mirth that Christmastide is to win it.

On Christmas morn joy reigns in every dwelling in the world ; so did it in the castle where Sir Gawayne now abode. The lord and the old ancient wife sit together, and Sir Gawayne sits by the wife of his host ; it were too tedious to tell of the meat, the mirth, and the joy that abounded everywhere. Trumpets and horns give forth their merry notes, and great was the joy for three days.

St. John's Day was the last day of the Christmas festival, and on the morrow many of the guests took their departure from the castle. Its lord thanked Sir Gawayne for the honour and pleasure of his visit, and endeavoured to keep him at his court. He desired also to know what had driven Sir Gawayne from Arthur's Court before the end of the Christmas holidays :

Sir Gawayne replied that " a high errand and a hasty one " had forced him to leave the Court. Then he asked his host whether he had ever heard of the Green Chapel. For there he had to be on New Year's Day, and he would as

lief die as fail in his errand. The prince tells Sir Gawayne he will teach him the way, and that the Green Chapel is not more than two miles from the castle. Then was Gawayne glad, and he consented to tarry awhile at the castle ; and its lord and castellan rejoiced too, and sent to ask the ladies to come and entertain their guest. And he asked Sir Gawayne to grant him one request : that he would keep his chamber on the morrow's morn, as he must be tired after his far travel. Meanwhile his host and the other men of the castle were to rise very early and go a-hunting.

" Whatsoever," said his host, " I win in the wood shall be yours ; and whatever hap be yours at home, I will as freely count as mine." And he gave Sir Gawayne in token a ring, which he was not to yield, no, not though it was thrice required of him by the fairest lady under heaven ! To all this Sir Gawayne gladly agreed, and so with much cheer a bargain was made between them ; and as night drew on each went early to his bed.

III

NEXT morn, full early before the day, all the folk of the castle up-rise, and saddle their horses, and truss their saddle-bags. The noble lord of the castle too arrays himself for riding, eats a sop hastily, and goes to mass. Before daylight he and his men are on their horses ; then the hounds are called out and coupled ; three short notes are blown by the bugles, and a hundred hunters join in the chase. To their stations the deer-stalkers go, and the hounds are cast off, and joyously the chase begins.

Roused by the clamour the deer rush to the heights, but

are soon driven back ; the harts and bucks are allowed to pass, but the hinds and does are driven back to the shade. As they fly they are shot by the bowmen : the hounds and the hunters, with a loud cry, follow in pursuit, and those that escape the arrows are killed by the hounds. The lord waxes joyful in the chase, which lasted till the approach of night.

All this time Sir Gawayne lay abed, and woke only to hear afar the baying of the hounds, and so to doze again. But at length there befell a knock at his door, and a damsel entered to bid him rise, and come to meat with her mistress. Straightway he arose, attired himself, put on his finger the fair ring that his host had given him, and descended to greet the lady of the castle.

" Good-morrow, fair sir," says she, " you are a late sleeper, I see ! " She tells him, with a laughing glance, that she doubts if he really be Sir Gawayne that all the world worships : for he cares better to sleep than to hunt with the knights in the wood, or talk with the ladies in their bower.

" In good faith," quoth Sir Gawayne, " save this ring on my finger, there is nought I would not yield thee in token of my service and thy courtesy."

The lady told him that if true courtesy were enclosed in himself, he would keep back nothing,—no, not so much as a ring ! But Sir Gawayne bethought him of his word to the lord of the castle ; of his promise also to the Green Knight. He may not, he says, yield up his ring ; but he will be for ever her true servant.

We leave now the lady and Sir Gawayne, and turn to tell how the lord of the land and his men end their hunt in wood and heath. Of the killed a " quarry " they make ;

and set about "breaking" the deer, and take away the "assay" or fat; and rend off the hide. When all is ready, they feed the hounds, and then they make for home.

Anon Sir Gawayne hearing them approach the castle, goes out to meet his host. Then the lord commands all his household to assemble, and the venison to be brought before him; he calls Gawayne and asks him whether he does not deserve much praise for his success in the chase. When the knight has said that fairer venison he has not seen in winter,—nay, not this seven year,—his host doth bid him take the whole, according to the agreement between them made last night. Gawayne gives the knight a comely kiss in return, and his host desires to know if he too has gotten much weal at home?

"Nay," says Sir Gawayne, "ask me no more of that!"

Thereupon the lord of the castle laughed, and they went to supper, where were dainties new, enough and to spare. Anon they are sitting by the hearth, while wine is carried round, and again Sir Gawayne and his host renew their compact as before, and so they take leave of each other and hasten to bed.

Scarce had the cock cackled thrice on the morrow, when the lord was up and again with his hunters and horns out and abroad, pursuing the chase. The hunters cheer on the hounds, which fall to the scent, forty at once; all come together by the side of a cliff and look about on all sides, beating the bushes. Out there rushes a fierce wild boar, who fells three to the ground with the first thrust. Full quickly the hunters pursue him; however, he attacks the hounds, causing them to yowl and yell. The bowmen send their arrows after this wild beast, but they glide off, shivered in pieces. Enraged with the blows, he attacks the hunters:

then the lord of the land blows his bugle, and pursues the boar.

All this time Sir Gawayne lies abed, as on the previous day, according to his promise. And again, when he is summoned out of his late slumbers, the lady of the castle twits him with his lack of courtesy.

"Sir," says she, "if ye indeed be Sir Gawayne, methinkest you would not have forgotten that which yesterday I taught!"

"What is that?" quoth he.

"That I taught you of giving," says she; "yet you give not the ring as courtesy requires."

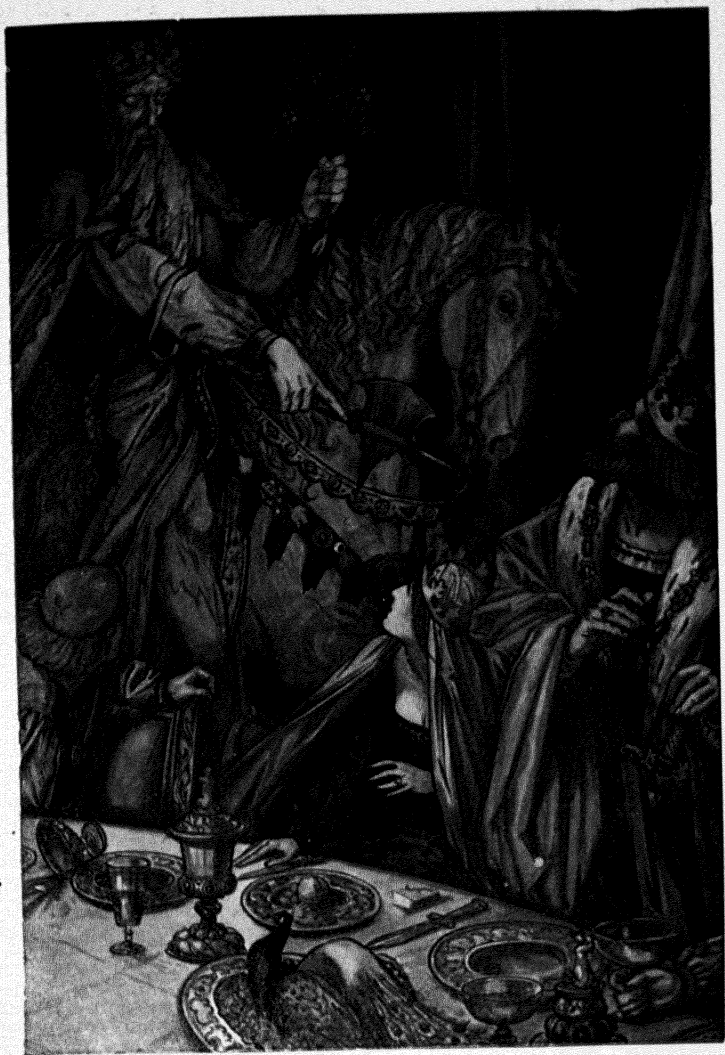
"Poor is the gift," he says, "that is not given of free will!"

But then the lady takes a ring from her own finger, and bids him to keep it. "And I would hear from you," she says, "some stories of beautiful dames, and of feats of arms and the deeds that become true knights."

Sir Gawayne says he has no sleight in the telling of such tales, and he may not take the ring she would give him, but he would for ever be her servant.

Meanwhile, the lord pursued the wild boar, that bit the backs of his hounds asunder, and caused the stoutest of his hunters to start back. At last the beast was too exhausted to run any more and entered a hole in a rock by the side of a brook, the froth foaming at his mouth. None durst approach him, so many had he torn with his tusks. The knight, seeing the boar at bay, alights from his horse, and seeks to attack him with his sword; the boar rushes out upon the man, who, aiming well, wounds him in the side, and the wild beast is killed by the hounds.

Then was there blowing of horns and baying of hounds.



The Green Knight entered the hall.

[See p. 70]

One, wise in wood-craft, begins to unlace the boar, and hews off the head. Then he feeds his hounds ; and the two halves of the carcase are next bound together and hung upon a pole. The boar's head is now borne before the lord of the castle, who hastens home.

Gawayne is called upon, when the hunt returns, to receive the spoil, and the lord of the land is well pleased when he sees him ; and shows him the wild boar, and tells him of its length and breadth. "Such a brawn of a beast," Sir Gawayne says he never has seen. To Gawayne then the wild boar is given, according to the covenant ; and in return he kisses his host, who declares his guest to be the best he knows.

Tables are raised aloft, cloths laid upon them, and waxen torches are lighted. With much mirth and glee supper is served in the hall. When they had long played in the hall, they went to the upper chamber, where they drank and discoursed. Sir Gawayne at length begs leave of his host to depart on the morrow ; but his host swears to him that he must stay, and come to the Green Chapel on New Year's morn long before prime. So Gawayne consents to remain for another night ; and full still and softly he sleeps throughout it.

Early in the morning the lord of the castle is up ; after mass, a morsel he takes with his men to break his fast. Then were they all mounted on their horses before the hall-gates, and ready for the hunt. It was a clear, frosty morning when they rode off, and the hunters, dispersed by a wood's side, came upon the track of a fox, which was followed up by the hounds. And now they get sight of the game, and pursue him through many a rough grove. The fox at last leaps over a spinney, and by a rugged path

seeks to get clear from the hounds ; he comes upon one of the hunting-stations, where he is attacked by the dogs. However, he slips them, and makes again for the woods. Then was it fine sport to listen to the hounds, and the hallooing of the hunters ; there the fox was threatened, and called a thief. But Reynard was wily, and led them far astray over brake and spinney.

Meanwhile, Sir Gawayne, left at home, soundly sleeps within his comely curtains. At length the lady of the castle, clothed in a rich mantle, comes to his chamber, opens a window, and reproaches him :—

“ Ah ! man, how canst thou sleep ? This morning is so clear.”

Sir Gawayne was dreaming of his forthcoming adventure at the Green Chapel when she aroused him, but he started up, and greeted his fair visitor. Again, as she had done before, she desired some gift by which to remember him when he was gone.

“ Now, sir,” she entreats him, “ now before thy departing, do me this courtesy ! ”

Sir Gawayne tells her that she is worthy of a far better gift than he can bestow. He has no men laden with trunks containing precious things.

Thereupon again the lady of the castle offers him a gold ring, but he refuses to accept it, as he has none that he is free to give in return. Very sorrowful was she on account of his refusal ; she takes off her green girdle, and beseeches him to take it. Gawayne again refuses to accept anything, but promises, “ ever in hot and in cold, to be her true servant.”

“ Do you refuse it,” says the lady, “ because it is simple ? Whoso knew the virtues that it possesses would highly

prize it. For he who is girded with this green girdle cannot be wounded or slain."

Thereupon Sir Gawayne thinks of his adventure at the Green Chapel, and when she again earnestly presses him to take the girdle, he consents not only to take it, but to keep the possession of it a secret. Then she takes her leave; Gawayne hides the girdle, and then hies to the chapel, and asks pardon for any misdeeds he has ever done. When he returns to the hall, he makes himself so merry among the ladies with comely songs and carols, that they said: "This knight was so merry never before, since hither he came to the castle!"

Meanwhile the lord of the castle was still in the field; he had already slain the fox. He had spied Reynard coming through a "rough grove" and tried to strike him with his sword; but the fox was seized by one of the hounds. The rest of the hunters hastened thither, with horns full many, for it was the merriest meet that ever was heard; and carrying the fox's skin and brush they all ride home. The lord at last alights at his dear home, where he finds Sir Gawayne amusing the ladies; the knight comes forward and welcomes his host, and according to covenant kisses him thrice.

"My faith!" says the other, "ye have had much bliss! I have hunted all day and have gotten nothing but the skin of this foul fox, a poor reward for three such kisses." He then tells him how the fox was slain; and with much mirth and minstrelsy they made merry until the time came for them to part. Gawayne takes leave of his host, and thanks him for his happy sojourn. He asks for a man to teach him the way to the Green Chapel. A servant is assigned him, and then he takes leave of the ladies, kissing

them sorrowfully. They commend him to Christ. He then departs, thanking each one he meets for his service and solace ; he retires to rest, but sleeps little, for much has he to think of on the morrow. Let him lie there, and be still awhile, and I will tell what next befell him.

IV

Now New Year's Day has drawn nigh, and the weather is stormy. Snow falls and the dale is full of deep drift. Gawayne in his bed hears each cock that crows ; he calls for the chamberlain, and bids him bring his armour. Men knock off the rust from his rich habergeon, and the knight then calls for his steed. While he clothed himself in his rich garments, he forgot not the girdle, the lady's gift, but with it doubly girded his loins ; he wore it not for its rich ornaments, " but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer." All the people of the castle he thanked full oft, and then was his steed Gringolet arrayed, full ready to prick on. Sir Gawayne returns thanks for the honour and kindness shown to him by all, and then he steps into the saddle from the mounting-stone, and says, " This castle to Christ I commend ; may He give it ever good chance ! "

Therewith the castle gates are opened, and the knight rides forth, and goes on his way accompanied by his guide. They ride by rocky ways and cliffs, where each hill wore a hat of cloud and a mist-cloak, and when it is full daylight, they find themselves " on a hill full high." Then his guide bade Sir Gawayne abide, saying :—

" I have brought you hither, and ye are not now far from the appointed place. Full perilous is it esteemed,

its lord is fierce and stern, his body is bigger than the best four in King Arthur's house ; none passes by the Green Chapel that he does not ding to death with dint of his hand, for be it churl or chaplain, monk, mass-priest, or any man else, he kills them all. He has lived there long, and against his sore dints ye may not defend you ; wherefore, good Sir Gawayne, let this man alone, and go by some other region, and I swear faithfully that I will never say that ever ye attempted to flee from any man."

Gawayne replies that to shun this danger would mark him as a coward knight ; to the chapel, therefore, he will go, though the lord thereof were the cruellest and strongest of men.

" Full well," says he, " can God devise how to save His true servants ! "

" Marry," quoth the other, " since it pleases thee to lose thy life, take thy helmet on thy head, and thy spear in thy hand, and ride down this path by yon rock-side, till thou come to the bottom of the valley. Look a little to the left, and thou shalt see the chapel itself and the man that guards it."

Having thus spoken, the guide takes leave of the knight. " By God's grace," says Sir Gawayne, " I will neither weep nor groan. To God's will I am full ready to bow ! " So on he rides through the dale, and eagerly looks about him. He sees, however, no sign of a resting-place, but only high and steep banks ; no chapel can he discern anywhere. At last he sees a hill by the side of a stream ; thither he goes, alights, and fastens his horse to the branch of a tree. He walks round the hill, looking for the chapel, debating with himself what it might be, and at last he comes upon an old cave in the crag. " Truly," he reflects, " a wild

place is here—a fitting place for the Green Knight to make his devotions in evil fashion ; if this be the chapel it is the most cursed kirk that ever I saw.”

But with that he hears a loud noise from beyond the brook. It clattered like the grinding of a scythe on a grindstone, and whirled like a mill-stream.

“ Though my life I forego,” says Gawayne, “ no noise shall terrify me.” And he cried aloud, “ Who dwells here and will hold discourse with me.” Then he heard a loud voice commanding him to abide where he stood, and soon there came out of a hole, with a fell weapon—a Danish axe, quite new—the Green Knight clothed just as Gawayne saw him long before. When he reached the stream, he leapt over it, and striding on, he met Sir Gawayne without the least obeisance.

“ God preserve thee ! ” he says, “ as a true knight thou hast timed thy travel. Thou knowest the covenant between us, that on New Year’s Day I should return thy blow. Here we are alone ; have off thy helmet and take thy pay at once.”

“ By my faith,” quoth Sir Gawayne, “ I shall not begrudge thee thy will.”

Then he shows his bare neck, and appears undaunted. The Green Knight seizes his grim weapon, and with all his force raises it aloft. As it came gliding down, Sir Gawayne shrunk a little with his shoulders, then the other reproved him, saying, “ Thou art not that Gawayne that is so good esteemed, for thou fleest for fear before thou feelest harm. I never flinched when thou struckest ; my head flew to my foot, yet I never fled ; wherefore I ought to be called the better man.”

“ I flinched once,” says Gawayne, “ but will no more.

Bring me to the point ; deal me my death-blow at once."

"Have at thee, then," says the other, and with that, prepares to aim the fatal blow. Gawayne never flinches, but stands as still as a stone.

"Now," says the Green Knight, "I must strike thee, since thy heart is whole."

"Strike on," says the other. Then the Green Knight makes ready to strike, and lets fall his axe on the bare neck of Sir Gawayne. The sharp weapon pierced the flesh so that the blood flowed. When Gawayne saw the blood on the snow, he unsheathed his sword, and thus he spake :—

"Cease, man, of thy blow. If thou givest me any more, blow for blow shall I requite thee ! We agreed only upon one stroke."

The Green Knight rested on his axe, looked at Sir Gawayne, who appeared bold and fearless, and addressed him as follows :—

"Bold knight, be not so wroth, I promised thee a stroke, and thou hast it. Be satisfied ; I could have dealt worse with thee ; I menaced thee first with one blow for the covenant between us on the first night. Another I aimed at thee because of the second night. A true man should restore truly, and then he need fear no harm. Thou failed at the third time, and therefore take thee that stroke, for my girdle (woven by my wife) thou wearest. I know thy secret, and my wife's gift to thee, for I sent her to try thee, and faultless I found thee : but yet thou sinnedst a little, since thou tookest the girdle to save thy skin and for love of thy life."

Sir Gawayne stands there confounded before the Green Knight.

"Cursed," he says, "be cowardice and covetousness both!"

Then he takes off the girdle, and throws it to the Green Knight, and confesses himself to have been guilty of untruth. Then the other, laughing, thus spoke:—

"Thou art confessed so clean, that I hold thee as free, as if thou hadst never been guilty. I give thee, Sir Gawayne, the gold-hemmed girdle as a token of thy adventure at the Green Chapel. Come again to my castle, and abide there for the remainder of the New Year's festival."

"Nay, forsooth," says Gawayne, "I have sojourned sadly, but bliss betide thee! Commend me to your comely wife, who beguiled me; but though I be now beguiled, methinks I should be excused! God reward you for your girdle! I will wear it in remembrance of my fault, and when pride shall prick me, one look upon this green band shall abate it. But tell me your right name, and I shall have done."

The Green Knight replies, "I am called Bernlak de Hautdesert, through the might of Morgan le Fay, the pupil of Merlin; she can tame even the haughtiest. It was she who caused me to test the renown of the Round Table, hoping to grieve Queen Guenever, and cause her death through fear. Morgan le Fay is even thine aunt; therefore come to her, and make merry in my house."

But Sir Gawayne refused to return with the Green Knight. He bade him a courteous farewell, and then he turned Gringolet's head again toward Arthur's hall. By wild ways and lonely places did he ride. Sometimes he harboured in a house by night, and sometimes he had to shift under the trees. The wound in his neck became

whole, but he still carried about him the belt in token of his fault.

Thus Sir Gawayne comes again at last to the Court of King Arthur, and great was the joy of them all to see him. The king and his knights ask him concerning his journey, and Gawayne tells them of his adventures, and of the Green Knight's castle and the lady, and lastly, of the girdle that he wore. He showed them the cut in his neck, and as he groaned for grief and shame, the blood rushed to his face.

"Lo!" says he, handling the green girdle, "this is the band of blame, a token of my cowardice and covetousness. I must needs wear it as long as I live."

The king comforts the knight, and all the Court too. Each knight of the brotherhood agrees to wear a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake, who evermore honoured it.



✻ ROBIN GOODFELLOW ✻

ONCE upon a time, a great while ago, when men did eat and drink less, and were more honest, and knew no knavery, there was wont to walk many harmless spirits called fairies, dancing in brave order in fairy rings on green hills with sweet music. Sometimes they were invisible, and sometimes took divers shapes. Many mad pranks would they play, as pinching of untidy damsels black and blue, and misplacing things in ill-ordered houses; but lovingly would they use good girls, giving them silver and other pretty toys, which they would leave for them, sometimes in their shoes, other times in their pockets, sometimes in bright basins and other clean vessels.

Now it chanced that^{*}in those happy days, a babe was born in a house to which the fairies did like well to repair. This babe was a boy, and the fairies, to show their pleasure, brought many pretty things thither, coverlets and delicate linen for his cradle; and capons, woodcock, and quail for the christening, at which there was so much good cheer that the clerk had almost forgot to say the babe's name,—Robin Goodfellow. So much for the birth and christening of little Robin.

When Robin was grown to six years of age, he was so knavish that all the neighbours did complain of him; for no sooner was his mother's back turned, but he was in one knavish action or other, so that his mother was constrained (to avoid the complaints) to take him with her to market or wheresoever she went or rode. But this helped little or nothing, for if he rode before her, then would he make mouths and ill-favoured faces at those he met: if he rode behind her, then would he clap his hand on the tail; so that his mother was weary of the many complaints that came against him. Yet knew she not how to beat him justly for it, because she never saw him do that which was worthy blows. The complaints were daily so renewed that his mother promised him a whipping. Robin did not like that cheer, and therefore, to avoid it, he ran away, and left his mother a-sorrowing for him.

After Robin had travelled a good day's journey from his mother's house he sat down, and being weary he fell asleep. No sooner had slumber closed his eye-lids, but he thought he saw many goodly proper little personages in antic measures tripping about him, and withal he heard such music, as he thought that Orpheus, that famous Greek fiddler (had he been alive), compared to one of these had

been but a poor musician. As delights commonly last not long, so did those end sooner than Robin would willingly they should have done ; and for very grief he awaked, and found by him lying a scroll wherein was written these lines following in golden letters :—

“ Robin, my only son and heir,
How to live take thou no care :
By nature thou hast cunning shifts,
Which I'll increase with other gifts.
Wish what thou wilt, thou shall it have ;
And for to fetch both fool and knave,
Thou hast the power to change thy shape,
To horse, to hog, to dog, to ape.
Transformed thus, by any means
See none thou harm'st but knaves and queans :
But love thou those that honest be,
And help them in necessity.
Do thus and all the world shall know
The pranks of Robin Goodfellow,
For by that name thou called shall be
To age's last posterity ;
And if thou keep my just command,
One day thou shall see Fairy Land ! ”

Robin, having read this, was very joyful, yet longed he to know whethêr he had the power or not, and to try it he wished for some meat ; presently a fine dish of roast veal was before him. Then wished he for plum-pudding ; he straightway had it. This liked him well, and because he was weary, he wished himself a horse : no sooner was his wish ended, but he was changed into as fine a nag as you need see, and leaped and curveted as nimbly as if he had

been in stable at rack and manger a full month. Then he wished himself a black dog, and he was so ; then a green tree, and he was so. So from one thing to another, till he was quite sure that he could change himself to anything whatsoever he liked.

Thereupon full of delight at his new powers, Robin Goodfellow set out, eager to put them to the test.

As he was crossing a field, he met with a red-faced carter's clown, and called to him to stop.

" Friend," quoth he, " what is a clock ? "

" A thing," answered the clown, " that shows the time of the day."

" Why then," said Robin Goodfellow, " be thou a clock and tell me what time of the day it is."

" I owe thee not so much service," answered the clown again, " but because thou shalt think thyself beholden to me, know that it is the same time of the day as it was yesterday at this time ! "

These shrewd answers vexed Robin Goodfellow, so that in himself he vowed to be revenged of the clown, which he did in this manner.

Robin Goodfellow turned himself into a bird, and followed this fellow who was going into a field a little from that place to catch a horse that was at grass. The horse being wild ran over dyke and hedge, and the fellow after, but to little purpose, for the horse was too swift for him. Robin was glad of this occasion, for now or never was the time to have his revenge.

Presently Robin shaped himself exactly like the horse that the clown followed, and so stood right before him. Then the clown took hold of the horse's mane and got on his back, but he had not ridden far when, with a stumble,

Robin hurled his rider over his head, so that he almost broke his neck. But then again he stood still, and let the clown mount him once more.

By the way which the clown now would ride was a great pond of water of a good depth, which covered the road. No sooner did he ride into the very middle of the pond, than Robin Goodfellow turned himself into a fish, and so left him with nothing but the pack-saddle on which he was riding betwixt his legs. Meanwhile the fish swiftly swam to the bank. And then Robin, changed to a naughty boy again, ran away laughing, "*Ho, ho, hoh!*" leaving the poor clown half drowned and covered with mud.

As Robin took his way along a green hedge-side he fell to singing :—

“ And can the doctor make sick men well ?
And can the gipsy a fortune tell
Without lily, germander, and cockle-shell ?
With sweet-brier,
And bon-fire
And straw-berry wine,
And columbine.”

And when he had sung this over, he fell to wondering what he should next turn himself into. Then as he saw the smoke rise from the chimneys of the next town, he thought to himself, it would be to him great sport to walk the streets with a broom on his shoulder, and cry “ Chimney sweep.”

But when presently Robin did this, and one did call him, then did Robin run away laughing, “ *Ho, ho, hoh!* ”

Next he set about to counterfeit a lame beggar, begging very pitifully: but when a stout chandler came out

of his shop to give Robin an alms, again he skipped off nimbly, laughing as his naughty manner was.

That same night, he did knock at many men's doors, and when the servants came out he blew out their candle and straightway vanished in the dark street, with his "*Ho, ho, hoh !*"

All these mirthful tricks did Robin play, that day and night, and in these humours of his he had many pretty songs, one of which I will sing as perfect as I can. He sang it in his chimney-sweeper's humour to the tune of, "*I have been a fiddler these fifteen years.*"

" Black I am from head to foot,
And all doth come by chimney soot.
Then, maidens, come and cherish him
That makes your chimneys neat and trim."

But it befell that, on the very next night to his playing the chimney-sweep, Robin had a summons from the land where there are no chimneys.

For King Oberon, seeing Robin Goodfellow do so many merry tricks, called him out of his bed with these words, saying :—

" Robin, my son, come quickly rise :
First stretch, then yawn, and rub your eyes ;
For thou must go with me to-night,
And taste of Fairy-land's delight."

Robin, hearing this, rose and went to him. There were with King Oberon many fairies, all attired in green. All these, with King Oberon, did welcome Robin Goodfellow into their company. Oberon took Robin by the hand and led him a fair dance : their musician had an excellent bag-

pipe made of a wren's quill and the skin of a Greenland fly. This pipe was so shrill, and so sweet, that a Scottish pipe compared to it, it would no more come near it than a Jew's-harp doth to an Irish harp. After they had danced, King Oberon said to Robin :—

“ Whene'er you hear the piper blow,
Round and round the fairies go !
And nightly you must with us dance,
In meadows where the moonbeams glance,
And make the circle, hand in hand—
That is the law of Fairy-land !
There thou shalt see what no man knows ;
While sleep the eyes of men doth close ! ”

So marched they, with their piper before, to the Fairy Land. There did King Oberon show Robin Goodfellow many secrets, which he never did open to the world. And there, in Fairy Land, doth Robin Goodfellow abide now this many a long year.

THE PRINCESS OF COLCHESTER

LONG ago there reigned a king who kept his Court at Colchester. In the midst of all his glory, his queen died, leaving behind her an only daughter, about fifteen years of age. This little lady, from her courtly carriage, beauty, and affability, was the wonder of all that knew her.

But as covetousness is the root of all evil, so it happened here. The king, hearing of a rich dame, who had an only daughter, for the sake of her riches had a mind to marry her ; and though she was old, ugly, hook-nosed, and hump-backed, yet all this could not deter him from doing so. Her daughter was a yellow dowdy, full of envy and ill-nature ; and, in short, was much of the same mould as her mother. This signified nothing, for in a few weeks the king, attended by the nobility and gentry, brought his new queen home to his palace. She had not been long in the Court before she set the king against his own beautiful daughter, by false reports and evil talès.

The young princess, having lost her father's love, grew weary of the Court, and one day, meeting with her father in the garden, she desired him, with tears in her eyes, to give her a small pittance, and she would go and seek her fortune ; to which the king consented, and ordered her mother-in-law to make up a small sum according to her discretion. She went to the queen, who gave her a canvas bag of brown bread and hard cheese, with a bottle of beer ; though this was but a very pitiful dowry for a king's daughter.

She took it, returned thanks, and proceeded on her journey, passing through groves, woods, and valleys, till at length she saw an old man sitting on a stone at the mouth of a cave.

"Good morrow, fair maiden," he said, "whither away so fast?"

"Aged father," says she, "I am going to seek my fortune."

"What hast thou in thy bag and bottle?"

"In my bag I have bread and cheese, and in my bottle good small beer. Will you please to partake of either?"

"Yes," said he, "with all my heart."

With that the lady pulled out her provisions, and bade him eat and welcome.

He did so, and gave her many thanks, and then he said to her: "There is a thick thorny hedge before you, which will appear impassable, but take this wand in your hand, strike three times, and say, 'Pray, hedge, let me come through,' and it will open immediately; then, a little further, you will find a well; sit down on the brink of it, and there will come up three golden heads, which will speak; and whatever they require, that do!"

Promising she would, she took her leave of him. Coming to the hedge, she pursued the old man's directions; it opened, and gave her a passage; then, coming to the well, she had no sooner sat down than a golden head came up singing:—

"Wash me, and comb me,
And lay me down softly."

"Yes," said she, and putting forth her hand, with a silver comb performed the office, placing it upon a primrose bank.

Then came up a second and a third head, saying the same as the former. And again she complied, and then pulling out her provisions ate her dinner.

Then said the heads one to another, "What shall we do for this lady who hath used us so kindly?"

The first said, "I will add such grace to her beauty as shall charm the most powerful prince in the world."

The second said, "I will endow her with fragrance such as shall far exceed the sweetest flowers."

The third said, "My gift shall be none of the least, for, as she is a king's daughter, I'll make her so fortunate that she shall become queen to the greatest prince that reigns."

This done, at their request she let them down into the well again, and so proceeded on her journey.

She had not travelled long before she saw a king hunting in the park with his nobles. She would have shunned him, but the king, having caught a sight of her, approached, and what with her beauty and grace, was so powerfully charmed that he fell in love with her at sight. Forthwith he offered her the finest horse in his train to ride upon; and so, bringing her to his palace, he there caused her to be clothed in the most magnificent manner with white and gold raiment.

This being ended, when the king heard that she was the King of Colchester's daughter he ordered some chariots to be got ready, that he might pay her father a visit. The chariot in which the king and queen rode was adorned with rich gems and ornaments of gold. Her father was at first astonished that his daughter had been so fortunate as she was, till the young king made him sensible of all that happened. Great was the joy at Court amongst all, with the exception of the queen and her ill-natured daughter, who were ready to burst with malice and envy of her

happiness ; and the greater was their madness because she was now above them all. Great rejoicings, with feasting and dancing, continued many days. Then at length, with the dowry her father gave her, they returned home.

The evil-minded sister-in-law, perceiving that her sister was so happy in seeking her fortune, would needs do the same ; so, disclosing her mind to her mother, all preparations were made, and she was furnished not only with rich apparel, but sugar, almonds, and sweetmeats, in great quantities, and a large bottle of Malaga sack.

Thus provided, she went the same road as her sister ; and coming near the cave, the old man said, " Young woman, whither so fast ? "

" What is that to you ? " said she.

" Then," said he, " what have you in your bag and bottle ? "

She answered, " Good things, which you shall not be troubled with."

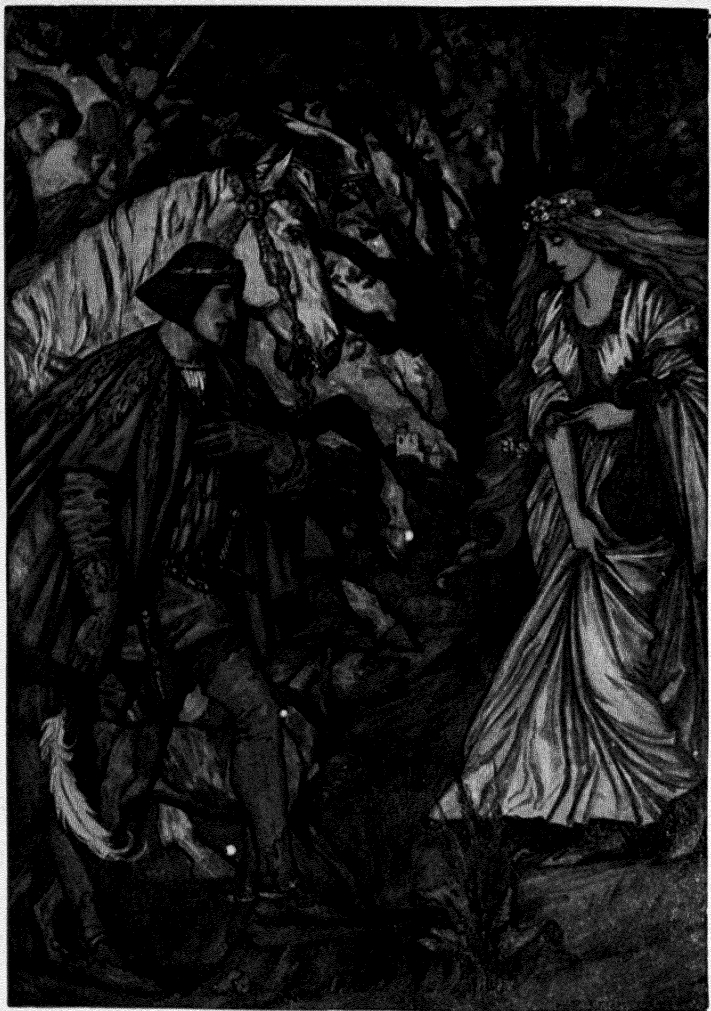
" Won't you give me some ? " said he.

" No, not a bit, nor a drop, unless it would choke you."

The old man frowned, saying, " Evil fortune attend thee ! "

Going on, she came to the hedge, through which she espied a gap, and thought to pass through it ; but, going in, the hedge closed, and the thorns ran into her flesh, so that it was with great difficulty that she got out. Being now in a most sad condition, she searched for water to wash herself, and looking round, she saw the well.

She sat down on the brink of it, and one of the heads came up, saying, " Wash me, comb me, and lay me down softly." But she banged it with her bottle, saying, " Take this for your washing."



He fell in love with her at sight.

[See p. 99]

Then the second and third heads came up, and met with no better treatment than the first; whereupon the heads consulted among themselves what evils to plague her with for such usage!

The first said, "Let her be struck with leprosy!"

The second, "Let her hair turn into packthread!"

The third bestowed on her for a husband but a poor country cobbler.

This done, she went on till she came to a town, and it being market-day, the people looked at her, and seeing such a leper's face, all fled but a poor country cobbler. Now, not long before he had mended the shoes of an old hermit, who, having no money, gave him a box of ointment for the cure of the leprosy. So the cobbler, having a mind to do an act of charity, went up to her and asked her who she was?

"I am," said she, "the King of Colchester's daughter-in-law."

"Well," said the cobbler, "if I restore you to your natural complexion, and make a sound cure of you, will you take me for a husband?"

"Yes, friend," replied she; "with all my heart!"

With this the cobbler applied his ointment, and it worked a cure in a few weeks; after which they were married, and so set forth for the Court at Colchester.

When the queen understood her dear daughter had married nothing but a poor cobbler, she fell into fits of rage, and hanged herself in wrath. The king gave the cobbler a hundred pounds to quit the Court with his lady, and take her to a remote part of the kingdom. There he lived many years mending shoes, his wife spinning thread, and I hope she made him happy.

LAZY JACK

A STORY WITHOUT A MORAL

ONCE upon a time there was a boy whose name was Jack, and he lived with his mother on a dreary common. They were very poor, and the old woman got her living by spinning ; but Jack was so lazy that he would do nothing but bask in the sun in the hot weather, and sit by the corner of the hearth in the winter-time. His mother could not persuade him to do anything for her, and was obliged at last to tell him that if he did not begin to work for his porridge, she would turn him out to get his living as he could.

This threat at length roused Jack, and he went out and hired himself for the day to a farmer for a penny ; but as he was coming home, never having had any money before, he lost it in passing over a brook. " You stupid boy," said his mother, " you should have put it in your pocket." " I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

The next day Jack went out again, and hired himself to a cowkeeper, who gave him a jar of milk for his day's work. Jack took the jar and put it into the large pocket of his jacket, spilling it all long before he got home. " Dear me ! " said the old woman, " you should have carried it on your head." " I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

The following day Jack hired himself again to a farmer, who agreed to give him a cream cheese for his services. In the evening Jack took the cheese, and went home with

it on his head. By the time he got home the cheese was completely spoilt, part of it being lost and part melted in his hair. "You stupid lout," said his mother, "you should have carried it very carefully in your hands." "I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

The day after this Jack again went out, and hired himself to a baker, who would give him nothing for his work but a large tom cat. Jack took the cat, and began carrying it very carefully in his hands, but in a short time Pussy scratched him so much that he was compelled to let it go. When he got home his mother said to him, "You silly fellow, you should have tied it with a string and dragged it along after you." "I'll do so another time," said Jack.

The next day Jack hired himself to a butcher, who rewarded his labours with a handsome present of a shoulder of mutton. Jack took the mutton, tied it to a string, and trailed it along after him in the dirt, so that by the time he got home the meat was completely spoilt. His mother was this time quite out of patience with him, for the next day was Sunday, and she was obliged to content herself with cabbage for her dinner. "You ninnyhammer," said she to her son, "you should have carried it on your shoulder." "I'll do so another time," replied Jack.

On the Monday Jack went once more, and hired himself to a cattle-keeper, who gave him a donkey for his trouble. Although Jack was very strong, he found some difficulty in hoisting the donkey on his shoulders, but at last he managed it, and began walking home with his prize. Now, it happened that in the course of his journey there lived a rich man with his only daughter, a beautiful girl, but unfortunately deaf and dumb. She had never laughed in her life, and the doctors said she would never recover till

somebody made her laugh. Many tried without success, and at last the father, in despair, offered to marry her to the first man who could make her laugh. This young lady happened to be looking out of the window when Jack was passing with the donkey on his shoulders, the legs sticking up in the air, and the sight was so comical and strange that she burst out into a great fit of laughter, and immediately recovered her speech and hearing. Her father was overjoyed, and fulfilled his promise by marrying her to Jack, who was thus made a rich man for life. They lived in a large house, and Jack's mother lived with them in great happiness until she died.

THE GIANT OF SAINT MICHAEL'S

WHEN King Arthur was king of this realm, it befell at one time that he departed and entered into the sea at Sandwich with all his army, with a great multitude of ships, galleys, and dromons, sailing on the sea.

And as the king lay in his cabin in the ship, he fell in a slumbering, and dreamed a marvellous dream: it seemed that a dreadful dragon did drown much of his people, and he came flying out of the west, and his head was enamelled with azure, and his shoulders shone as gold, his body like mails ¹ of a marvellous hue, his tail full of tatters, his feet full of fine sable, and his claws like fine gold; and an hideous flame of fire flew out of his mouth, like as the land and water had flamed all of fire. After him, there came out of the Orient a grimly boar, all black, sailing in a cloud, and his paws as big as a post. He was rugged looking, roughly; he was the foulest beast that ever man saw, he roared and romed ² so hideously that it was marvel to hear. Then the dreadful dragon advanced him and came in the wind like a falcon, giving great strokes on the boar, and the boar hit him again with his grisly tusks that his breast was all bloody, and that the hot blood made all the sea red of his blood. Then the dragon flew away all on an height, and came down with such a swough, and smote the boar on the ridge, which was ten foot large from the foot to the tail, and smote the boar all to powder,

¹ A coat of mail.

² Growled.

both flesh and bones, that it flittered all abroad on the sea. And therewith the king awoke anon and was sore abashed of this dream ; and sent anon for a wise man, commanding to tell him the meaning of his dream.

" Sir," said the wise man, " the dragon that thou dreamedst of betokeneth thine own person that sailest here, and the colour of his wings be thy realms thou that hast won, and his tail which is all to-tattered signifieth the noble knights of the Round Table. And the boar that the dragon slew coming from the clouds, either betokeneth some tyrant that tormenteth the people, or else that thou art like to fight with some giant thyself, being horrible and abominable, whose peer ye saw never in your days. Wherefore of this dreadful dream doubt thee nothing, but as a conqueror come forth thyself."

Then after this soon they had sight of land, and when they were there, a husbandman of that country came and told him there was a great giant which had slain, murdered, and devoured much people of the country, and had been sustained seven years with the children of the commons of that land, insomuch, that all the children be all slain and destroyed.

" And now late," saith this countryman, " he hath taken the Duchess of Brittany as she rode with her train, and hath led her to his lodging which is in a mountain, for to keep her to her life's end ; and many people followed her, more than five hundred, but all they might not rescue her, but they left her shrieking and crying lamentably, wherefore I suppose that he hath slain her. Now as thou art a rightful king have pity on this lady, and revenge us all as thou art a noble conqueror."

" Alas ! " said King Arthur, " this is a great mischief, I

Had rather than the best realm that I have that I had been a furlong way tofore him, for to have rescued that lady. Canst thou bring me where this giant haunteth ? ”

“ Yea, sir,” said the good man, “ lo, yonder where as thou seest those two great fires, there thou shalt find him, and more treasure than I suppose is in all France.”

When the king had understood this piteous case he returned into his tent.

Then he called unto him Sir Kay and Sir Bedivere, and commanded them secretly to make ready horse and harness for himself and them twain, for after evensong he would ride on pilgrimage with them two only unto Saint Michael's Mount. And then anon he made him ready and armed him at all points, and took his horse and his shield. And so they three departed thence, and rode forth as fast as ever they might till that they came unto the foot of that mount. And there they alighted, and the king commanded them to tarry there, for he would himself go up into that mount. And so he ascended up into that hill till he came to a great fire, and there he found a careful widow wringing her hands and making great sorrow, sitting by a grave new made.

King Arthur saluted her, and demanded of her wherefore she made such lamentation : to whom she answered and said, “ Sir knight, speak soft, for yonder is a demon : if he hear thee speak he will come and destroy thee ; I hold thee unhappy ; what dost thou here in this mountain ? for if ye were such fifty as ye be, ye were not able to make resistance against this devil : here lieth a duchess dead, the which was the fairest of all the world, wife to Sir Howell, Duke of Brittany ; he hath murdered her.”

“ Dame,” said the king, “ I come from the noble con-

queror King Arthur, for to treat with that tyrant for his liege people."

"Fie upon such treaties," said the widow, "he setteth not by the king, nor by no man else. Beware, approach him not too nigh, for he hath vanquished fifteen kings, and hath made him a coat full of precious stones, embroidered with their beards, which they sent him to have his love for salvation of their people at this last Christmas. And if thou wilt, speak with him at yonder great fire at supper."

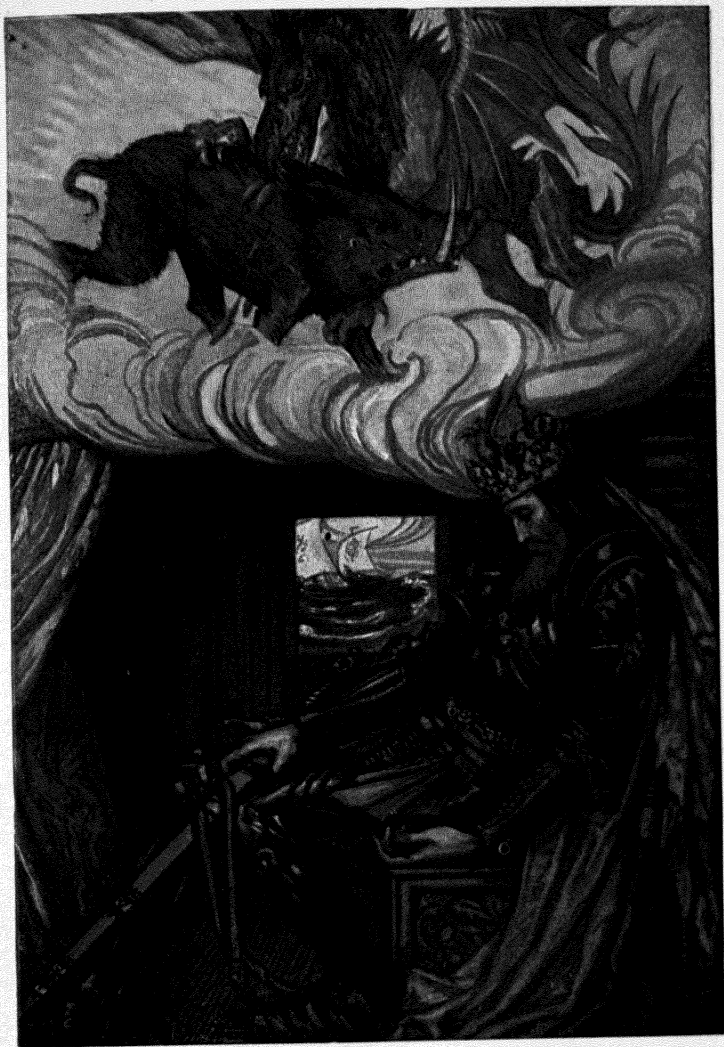
"Well," said Arthur, "I will accomplish my message for all your fearful words."

And he went forth by the crest of that hill, and saw where the giant sat at supper gnawing on a limb of a man, baking his broad limbs by the fire, and three fair damsels turning three spits, whereon were broached twelve young children like young birds.

When King Arthur beheld that piteous sight he had great compassion on them so that his heart bled for sorrow, and hailed him saying in this wise,—

"He that all the world wieldeth, give thee short life and shameful death. Why hast thou murdered these young innocent children, and murdered this duchess? Therefore arise and dress thee, thou glutton; for this day shalt thou die of my hand."

Then the glutton anon started up and took a great club in his hand, and smote at the king that his coronal fell to the ground. And the king hit the giant again, and carved his body till his blood fell down in two streams. Then the giant threw away his club, and caught the king in his arms that he crushed his ribs. Then the three maidens kneeled down and called to Christ for help and comfort of Arthur. And then Arthur weltered and wrestled with the



He fell in a slumbering, and dreamed a marvelous dream. [See p. 105]

giant, that he was other while under and another time above. And so weltering and wallowing they rolled down the hill till they came to the sea mark, and ever as they so weltered Arthur smote him with his dagger, and it fortuneth they came to the place where as the two knights were that kept Arthur's horse. Then when they saw the king fast in the giant's arms they came and loosed him.

And then the king commanded Sir Kay to smite off the giant's head, and to set it upon a truncheon of a spear, and bear it to Sir Howell, and tell him that his enemy was slain. "After this," said the king, "let his head be bound to a barbican that all the people may see and behold it; and go ye two up to the mountain and fetch me my shield, my sword, and the club of iron. And as for the treasure take ye it, for ye shall find there goods out of number. So I have the kirtle and the club, I desire no more. This was the fiercest giant that ever I met with, save one in the mount of Arabe which I overcame, but this was greater."

Then the knights fetched the club and the kirtle, and some of the treasure they took to themselves, and returned again to the host. And anon this was known through all the country, wherefore the people came and thanked the king. And he said again, "Give the thanks to God, and part the goods among you." And after that, King Arthur said and commanded his cousin Howell that he should ordain for a church to be builded on the same hill, in the worship of Saint Michael.

JACK AND THE BEAN-STALK

A WIDOW had an only child named Jack, whom she gratified in everything ; the end of her foolish kindness was that Jack paid little attention to anything she said, and he was heedless and naughty. His follies were not owing to bad nature, but to his mother never having chided him. As he would not work, she was obliged to sell everything she had. At last nothing remained but a cow.

The widow, with tears in her eyes, could not help scolding Jack. " Oh ! you wicked boy," said she, " by your naughty course of life you have now brought us both to fall ! Heedless, heedless boy ! I have not money enough to buy a bit of bread for another day : nothing remains but my poor cow, and that must be sold, or we must starve ! "

Jack was in a degree of tenderness for a few minutes, but soon over ; and then becoming very hungry for want of food he teased his poor mother to let him sell the cow ; which at last she sadly allowed him to do.

As he went on his journey he met a butcher, who asked why he was driving the cow from home ? Jack replied he was going to sell it. The butcher had some wonderful beans, of different colours, in his bag, which caught Jack's fancy. This the butcher saw, who, knowing Jack's easy temper, made up his mind to take advantage of it, and offered all the beans for the cow. The foolish boy thought it a great offer. The bargain was momentarily struck, and the cow exchanged for a few paltry beans. When Jack

hastened home with the beans and told his mother, she kicked the beans away in a great passion. They flew in all directions, and fell as far as the garden.

Early in the morning Jack arose from his bed, and seeing something strange from the window, he hastened downstairs into the garden, where he soon found that some of the beans had taken root, and sprung up wonderfully : the stalks grew of an immense thickness, and had so entwined, that they formed a ladder like a chain in view.

Looking upwards, he could not descry the top, it seemed to be lost in the clouds. He tried it, found it firm, and not to be shaken. A new idea immediately struck him : he would climb the bean-stalk, and see whither it would lead. Full of this plan, which made him forget even his hunger, Jack hastened to tell it to his mother.

He at once set out, and after climbing for some hours, reached the top of the bean-stalk, tired and almost exhausted. Looking round, he was surprised to find himself in a strange country ; it seemed to be quite a barren desert ; not a tree, shrub, house, or living creature was to be seen.

Jack sat himself pensively upon a block of stone, and thought of his mother ; his hunger attacked him, and now he felt sorrowful for his disobedience in climbing the bean-stalk against her will ; and made up his mind that he must now die for want of food.

However, he walked on, hoping to see a house where he might beg something to eat. Suddenly he saw a beautiful young woman at some distance. She was dressed in an elegant manner, and had a small white wand in her hand, on the top of which was a peacock of pure gold. She came near and said : " I will tell to you a story your mother dare not. But before I begin, I require a

solemn promise on your part to do what I command. "I am a fairy, and unless you perform exactly what I direct you to do, you will take from me the power to assist you ; and there is little doubt but that you will die in the attempt." Jack was rather frightened at this caution, but promised to follow her directions.

"Your father was a rich man, with a greatly generous nature. It was his practice never to refuse help to the poor people about him ; but, on the contrary, to seek out the helpless and distressed. Not many miles from your father's house lived a huge giant, who was the dread of the country around for cruelty and wickedness. This creature was moreover of a very envious spirit, and disliked to hear others talked of for their goodness and humanity, and he vowed to do him a mischief, so that he might no longer hear his good actions made the subject of every one's talk. Your father was too good a man to fear evil from others ; so it was not long before the cruel giant found a chance to put his wicked threats into practice ; for hearing that your parents were about passing a few days with a friend at some distance from home, he caused your father to be waylaid and murdered, and your mother to be seized on their way homeward.

"At the time this happened, you were but a few months old. Your poor mother, almost dead with affright and horror, was borne away by the cruel giant's servants to a dungeon under his house, in which she and her poor babe were both long kept prisoners. Distracted at the absence of your parents, the servants went in search of them ; but no tidings of either could be got. Meantime he caused a will to be found making over all your father's property to him as your guardian, and as such he took open possession.

“After your mother had been some months in prison, the giant offered to restore her to liberty, on condition that she would solemnly swear that she would never tell the story of her wrongs to any one. To put it out of her power to do him any harm, should she break her oath, the giant had her put on shipboard, and taken to a distant country ; where she was left with no more money for her support than what she got by selling a few jewels she had hidden in her dress.

“I was appointed your father’s guardian at his birth ; but fairies have laws to which they are subject as well as mortals. A short time before the giant killed your father, I transgressed : my punishment was the loss of my power for a certain time, which, alas, entirely prevented my helping your father, even when I most wished to do so. The day on which you met the butcher, as you went to sell your mother’s cow, my power was restored. It was I who secretly prompted you to take the beans in exchange for the cow. By my power the bean-stalk grew to so great a height, and formed a ladder. The giant lives in this country ; you are the person who must punish him for all his wickedness. You will meet with dangers and difficulties, but you must persevere in avenging the death of your father, or you will not prosper in any of your doings.

“As to the giant’s goods, everything he has is yours, though you are deprived of it ; you may take, therefore, what part of it you can. You must, however, be careful, for such is his love for gold, that the first loss he discovers will make him outrageous and very watchful for the future. But you must still pursue him ; for it is only by cunning that you can ever hope to get the better of him, and become possessed of your rightful property, and the means of

justice overtaking him for his barbarous murder. One thing I desire is, do not let your mother know you are aware of your father's history till you see me again.

"Go along the direct road ; you will soon see the house where your cruel enemy lives. While you do as I order you, I will protect and guard you ; but remember, if you disobey my commands, a dreadful punishment awaits you."

As soon as she had made an end she disappeared, leaving Jack to follow his journey. He walked on till after sunset, when, to his great joy, he espied a large mansion. This pleasant sight revived his drooping spirits ; he redoubled his speed, and reached it shortly. A well-looking woman stood at the door : he spoke to her, begging she would give him a morsel of bread and a night's lodging. She expressed the greatest surprise at seeing him ; and said it was quite uncommon to see any strange creature near their house, for it was mostly known that her husband was a very cruel and powerful giant, and one that would eat human flesh, if he could possibly get it.

This account terrified Jack greatly, but still, not forgetting the fairy's protection, he hoped to elude the giant, and therefore he begged the woman to take him in for one night only, and hide him where she thought proper. The good woman at last suffered herself to be persuaded, for she had a kind heart, and at last led him into the house.

First they passed an elegant hall, finely furnished ; they then went through several spacious rooms, all in the same style of grandeur, but they seemed to be quite forsaken and desolate. A long gallery came next ; it was very dark, just large enough to show that, instead of a wall each side, there was a grating of iron, which parted off a dismal dungeon, from whence issued the groans of several poor

victims whom the cruel giant kept shut up in readiness for his very large appetite. Poor Jack was in a dreadful fright at witnessing such a horrible scene, which caused him to fear that he would never see his mother, but he captured lastly for the giant's meat ; but still he recollected the fairy, and a gleam of hope forced itself into his heart.

The good woman then took Jack to a large kitchen, where a great fire was kept ; she bade him sit down, and gave him plenty to eat and drink. When he had done his meal and enjoyed himself, he was disturbed by a hard knocking at the gate, so loud as to cause the house to shake. Jack was hidden in the oven, and the giant's wife ran to let in her husband.

Jack heard him accost her in a voice like thunder, saying : " Wife ! wife ! I smell fresh meat ! " " Oh ! my dear," replied she, " it is nothing but the people in the dungeon." The giant seemed to believe her, and at last seated himself by the fireside, whilst the wife prepared supper.

By degrees Jack managed to look at the monster through a small crevice. He was much surprised to see what an amazing quantity he devoured, and supposed he would never have done eating and drinking. After his supper was ended, a very curious hen was brought and placed on the table before him. Jack's curiosity was great to see what would happen. He saw that it stood quiet before him, and every time the giant said : " Lay ! " the hen laid an egg of solid gold. The giant amused himself a long time with his hen ; meanwhile his wife went to bed. At length he fell asleep, and snored like the roaring of a cannon. Jack, finding him still asleep at daybreak, crept softly from his hiding-place, seized the hen, and ran off with her as fast as his legs could possibly carry him.

Jack easily found his way to the bean-stalk, and came down better and quicker than he expected. His mother was overjoyed to see him. "Now, mother," said Jack, "I have brought you home that which will make you rich." The hen laid as many golden eggs as they desired; they sold them, and soon had as much riches as they wanted.

For a few months Jack and his mother lived very happy, but he longed to pay the giant another visit. Early one morning he again climbed the bean-stalk, and reached the giant's mansion late in the evening: the woman was at the door as before. Jack told her a pitiful tale, and prayed for a night's shelter. She told him that she had admitted a poor hungry boy once before, and the little ingrate had stolen one of the giant's treasures, and ever since that she had been cruelly used. She, however, led him to the kitchen, gave him a supper, and put him in a lumber closet. Soon after the giant came in, took his supper, and ordered his wife to bring down his bags of gold and silver. Jack peeped out of his hiding-place, and observed the giant counting over his treasures, and after which he carefully put them in bags again, fell asleep, and snored as before. Jack crept quietly from his hiding-place, and approached the giant, when a little dog under the chair barked furiously. Much to his surprise, the giant slept on soundly, and the dog ceased. Jack seized the bags, reached the door in safety, and soon arrived at the bottom of the bean-stalk. When he reached his mother's cottage, he found it quite deserted. Full of astonishment he ran into the village, and an old woman directed him to a house, where he found his mother apparently dying. On being told of our hero's safe return, his mother revived. Jack then presented two bags of gold and silver to her.

His mother saw that something preyed upon his mind heavily, and tried to find out the cause ; but Jack knew too well what the consequence would be should he discover the cause of his melancholy to her. He did his utmost therefore to conquer the great desire which now forced itself upon him in spite of himself for another journey up the bean-stalk, but in vain.

On the longest day Jack arose as soon as it was light, climbed the bean-stalk, and reached the top with some little trouble. He found the road, journey, etc., the same as before. He arrived at the giant's house in the evening, and found his wife standing as usual at the door. Jack now appeared a different character, and had disguised himself so completely that she did not appear to remember him. However, when he begged admittance, he found it very difficult to persuade her. At last he prevailed, was allowed to go in, and was hidden in the copper.

When the giant returned, he said, as usual : " Wife ! wife ! I smell fresh meat ! " But Jack felt quite composed, as he had said so before, and had soon been satisfied. However, the giant started up suddenly, and notwithstanding all his wife could say, he searched all round the room. Whilst this was going forward, Jack was much terrified, and ready to die with fear, wishing himself at home a thousand times ; but when the giant approached the copper, and put his hand upon the lid, Jack thought his death was certain. Fortunately the giant ended his search there, without moving the lid, and seated himself quietly by the fireside.

When the giant's supper was over, he commanded his wife to fetch down his harp. Jack peeped under the copper-lid, and soon saw the most beautiful one that

could be imagined. It was put by the giant on the table, who said : " Play," and it instantly played of its own accord. The music was uncommonly fine. Jack was delighted, and felt more anxious to get the harp into his possession than either of the former treasures.

The giant's soul was not attuned to harmony, and the music soon lulled him into a sound sleep. Jack soon made up his mind, got out of the copper, and seized the harp ; which, however, being enchanted by a fairy, called out loudly : " Master, master ! "

The giant awoke, stood up, and tried to pursue Jack ; but he had drank so much that he could not stand. Jack ran as quick as he could. In a little time the giant was well enough to walk slowly, or rather to reel after him ; but as he then was, Jack contrived to be first at the top of the bean-stalk. The giant called to him all the way along the road in a voice like thunder, and was sometimes very near to him.

The moment Jack got down the bean-stalk, he called out for a hatchet : one was brought him directly. Just at that instant the giant began to descend, but Jack with his hatchet cut the bean-stalk close off at the root, and the giant fell headlong into the garden. The fall instantly killed him.

Jack heartily begged his mother's pardon for all the sorrow and affliction he had caused her, promising most faithfully to be dutiful and obedient to her in future. He proved as good as his word, and became a pattern of affectionate behaviour for the rest of her life ; and, let us hope, he never lost his mother-wit.

DICK WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT

IN the reign of the famous King Edward III. there was a little boy called Dick Whittington, whose father and mother died when he was very young, so that he remembered nothing at all about them, and was left a ragged little fellow, running about a country village. As poor Dick was not old enough to work, he was very badly off, and often had nothing to eat. But he was a sharp boy. On Sunday he was sure to get near the farmers, as they sat talking on the tombstones in the churchyard, before the parson was come ; and once a week you might see little Dick leaning against the sign-post of the village alehouse, where people stopped to drink as they came from the next market town ; and when the barber's shop door was open, Dick listened to all the news that his customers told one another.

In this manner Dick heard a great many very strange things about the great city called London ; for the foolish country people at that time thought that folks in London were all fine gentlemen and ladies ; and that there was singing and music there all day long ; and that the streets were all paved with gold.

One day a large waggon and eight horses, all with bells at their heads, drove through the village while Dick was standing by the sign-post. He thought that this waggon must be going to the fine town of London ; so he took courage, and asked the waggoner to let him walk with him

by the side of the waggon. As soon as the waggonier heard that poor Dick had no father or mother, and saw by his ragged clothes that he could not be worse off than he was, he told him he might go if he would, so they set off together.

I could never find out how little Dick contrived to get meat and drink on the road ; nor how he could walk so far, for it was a long way ; nor what he did at night for a place to lie down to sleep in. Perhaps some good-natured people in the towns that he passed through, when they saw he was a poor little ragged boy, gave him something to eat ; and perhaps the waggoner let him get into the waggon at night, and take a nap upon one of the boxes or large parcels in the waggon.

Dick, however, got safe to London, and was in such a hurry to see the fine streets paved all over with gold, that I am afraid he did not even stay to thank the kind waggoner ; but ran off as fast as his legs would carry him, through many of the streets, thinking every moment to come to those that were paved with gold ; for Dick had seen a guinea three times in his own little village, and remembered what a deal of money it brought in change ; so he thought he had nothing to do but to take up some little bits of the pavement, and should then have as much money as he could wish for.

Poor Dick ran till he was tired, and had quite forgot his friend the waggoner ; but at last, finding it grow dark, and that every way he turned he saw nothing but dirt instead of gold, he sat down in a dark corner and cried himself to sleep.

Little Dick was all night in the streets ; and next morning, being very hungry, he got up and walked about, and asked everybody he met to give him a halfpenny to keep him from starving ; but nobody stayed to answer him, and only two or three gave him a halfpenny ; so that

the poor boy was soon quite weak and faint for the want of victuals.

At last a good-natured looking gentleman saw how hungry he looked. "Why don't you go to work, my lad?" said he to Dick. "That I would, but I do not know how to get any," answered Dick. "If you are willing, come along with me," said the gentleman, and took him to a hay-field, where Dick worked briskly, and lived merrily till the hay was made.

After this he found himself as badly off as before; and being almost starved again, he laid himself down at the door of Mr. Fitzwarren, a rich merchant. Here he was soon seen by the cook-maid, who was an ill-tempered creature, and happened just then to be very busy dressing dinner for her master and mistress; so she called out to poor Dick: "What business have you there, you lazy rogue? there is nothing else but beggars; if you do not take yourself away, we will see how you will like a sousing of some dish-water; I have some here hot enough to make you jump."

Just at that time Mr. Fitzwarren himself came home to dinner; and when he saw a dirty ragged boy lying at the door, he said to him: "Why do you lie there, my boy? You seem old enough to work; I am afraid you are inclined to be lazy."

"No, indeed, sir," said Dick to him, "that is not the case, for I would work with all my heart, but I do not know anybody, and I believe I am very sick for the want of food." "Poor fellow, get up; let me see what ails you."

Dick now tried to rise, but was obliged to lie down again, being too weak to stand, for he had not eaten any food for three days, and was no longer able to run about and beg a halfpenny of people in the street. So the kind merchant

ordered him to be taken into the house, and have a good dinner given him, and be kept to do what dirty work he was able for the cook.

Little Dick would have lived very happy in this good family if it had not been for the ill-natured cook, who was finding fault and scolding him from morning to night, and besides, she was so fond of basting, that when she had no meat to baste, she would baste poor Dick's head and shoulders with a broom, or anything else that happened to fall in her way. At last her ill-usage of him was told to Alice, Mr. Fitzwarren's daughter, who told the cook she should be turned away if she did not treat him kinder.

The ill-humour of the cook was now a little amended ; but besides this Dick had another hardship to get over. His bed stood in a garret, where there were so many holes in the floor and the walls that every night he was tormented with rats and mice. A gentleman having given Dick a penny for cleaning his shoes, he thought he would buy a cat with it. The next day he saw a girl with a cat, and asked her if she would let him have it for a penny. The girl said she would, and at the same time told him the cat was an excellent mouser.

Dick hid his cat in the garret, and always took care to carry a part of his dinner to her ; and in a short time he had no more trouble with the rats and mice, but slept quite sound every night.

Soon after this, his master had a ship ready to sail ; and as he thought it right that all his servants should have some chance for good fortune as well as himself, he called them all into the parlour and asked what they would send out.

They all had something that they were willing to venture except poor Dick, who had neither money nor goods, and therefore could send nothing.

•For this reason he did not come into the parlour with the rest ; but Miss Alice guessed what was the matter, and ordered him to be called in. She then said she would lay down some money for him, from her own purse ; but her father told her this would not do, for it must be something of his own.

When poor Dick heard this, he said he had nothing but a cat which he bought for a penny some time since of a little girl.

“ Fetch your cat then, my good boy,” said Mr. Fitz-warren, “ and let her go.”

Dick went upstairs and brought down poor puss, with tears in his eyes, and gave her to the captain ; for he said he should now be kept awake again all night by the rats and mice.

All the company laughed at Dick’s odd venture ; and Miss Alice, who felt pity for the poor boy, gave him some money to buy another cat.

This, and many other marks of kindness shown him by Miss Alice, made the ill-tempered cook jealous of poor Dick, and she began to use him more cruelly than ever, and always made game of him for sending his cat to sea. She asked him if he thought his cat would sell for as much money as would buy a stick to beat him.

At last poor Dick could not bear this usage any longer, and he thought he would run away from his place ; so he packed up his few things, and started very early in the morning, on All-Hallow’s Day, which is the first of November. He walked as far as Holloway ; and there sat down on a stone, which to this day is called Whittington’s stone, and began to think to himself which road he should take as he went onwards.

While he was thinking what he should do, the Bells of

Bow Church, which at that time had only six, began to ring, and he fancied their sound seemed to say to him :—

“ Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London.”

“ Lord Mayor of London ! ” said he to himself. “ Why, to be sure, I would put up with almost anything now, to be Lord Mayor of London, and ride in a fine coach, when I grow to be a man ! Well, I will go back, and think nothing of the cuffing and scolding of the old cook, if I am to be Lord Mayor of London at last.”

Dick went back, and was lucky enough to get into the house, and set about his work, before the old cook came downstairs.

The ship, with the cat on board, was a long time at sea ; and was at last driven by the winds on a part of the coast of Barbary, where the only people were the Moors, that the English had never known before.

The people then came in great numbers to see the sailors, who were of different colour to themselves, and treated them very civilly ; and, when they became better acquainted, were very eager to buy the fine things that the ship was loaded with.

When the captain saw this, he sent patterns of the best things he had to the king of the country ; who was so much pleased with them, that he sent for the captain to the palace. Here they were placed, as it is the custom of the country, on rich carpets marked with gold and silver flowers. The king and queen were seated at the upper end of the room ; and a number of dishes were brought in for dinner. They had not sat long, when a vast number of rats and mice rushed in, helping themselves from almost every dish.

The captain wondered at this, and asked if these vermin were not very unpleasant.

"Oh, yes," said they, "very destructive; and the king would give half his treasure to be freed of them, for they not only destroy his dinner, as you see, but they assault him in his chamber, and even in bed, so that he is obliged to be watched while he is sleeping for fear of them."

The captain jumped for joy; he remembered poor Whittington and his cat, and told the king he had a creature on board the ship that would despatch all these vermin immediately. The king's heart heaved so high at the joy which this news gave him that his turban dropped off his head. "Bring this creature to me," says he; "vermin are dreadful in a court, and if she will perform what you say, I will load your ship with gold and jewels, in exchange for her." The captain, who knew his business, took this opportunity to set forth the merits of Miss Puss. He told his majesty that it would be inconvenient to part with her, as, when she was gone, the rats and mice might destroy the goods in the ship—but to oblige his majesty he would fetch her. "Run, run!" said the queen; "I am impatient to see the dear creature."

Away went the captain to the ship, while another dinner was got ready. He put puss under his arm, and arrived at the place soon enough to see the table full of rats.

When the cat saw them, she did not wait for bidding, but jumped out of the captain's arms, and in a few minutes laid almost all the rats and mice dead at her feet. The rest of them in their fright scampered away to their holes.

The king and queen were quite charmed to get so easily rid of such plagues, and desired that the creature who had done them so great a kindness might be brought to them for inspection. Upon which the captain called: "Pussy,

pussy, pussy ! ” and she came to him. He then presented her to the queen, who started back, and was afraid to touch a creature who had made such a havoc among the rats and mice. However, when the captain stroked the cat and called : “ Pussy, pussy,” the queen also touched her and cried : “ Putty, putty,” for she had not learned English. He then put her down on the queen’s lap, where she, purring, played with her majesty’s hand, and then sung herself to sleep.

The king, having seen the exploits of Mrs. Puss, and being informed that her kittens would stock the whole country, bargained with the captain for the whole ship’s cargo, and then gave him ten times as much for the cat as all the rest amounted to.

The captain then took leave of the royal party, and set sail with a fair wind for England, and after a happy voyage arrived safe in London.

One morning Mr. Fitzwarren had just come to his counting-house and seated himself at the desk, when somebody came tap, tap, at the door. “ Who’s there ! ” says Mr. Fitzwarren ; “ A friend,” answered the other ; “ I come to bring you good news of your ship *Unicorn*.” The merchant, bustling up instantly, opened the door, and who should be seen waiting but the captain and factor, with a cabinet of jewels, and a bill of lading, for which the merchant lifted up his eyes and thanked heaven for sending him such a prosperous voyage.

They then told the story of the cat, and showed the rich present that the king and queen had sent for her to poor Dick. As soon as the merchant heard this, he called out to his servants :—

“ Go fetch him—we will tell him of the same ;
Pray call him Mr. Whittington by name.”

Mr. Fitzwarren now showed himself to be a good man ; for when some of his servants said so great a treasure was too much for Dick, he answered : " God forbid I should deprive him of the value of a single penny."

He then sent for Dick, who at that time was scouring pots for the cook, and was quite dirty.

Mr. Fitzwarren ordered a chair to be set for him, and so he began to think they were making game of him, at the same time begging them not to play tricks with a poor simple boy, but to let him go down again, if they pleased, to his work.

" Indeed, Mr. Whittington," said the merchant, " we are all quite in earnest with you, and I most heartily rejoice in the news these gentlemen have brought you ; for the captain has sold your cat to the King of Barbary, and brought you in return for her more riches than I possess in the whole world ; and I wish you may long enjoy them ! "

Mr. Fitzwarren then told the men to open the great treasure they had brought with them ; and said : " Mr. Whittington has nothing to do but to put it in some place of safety."

Poor Dick hardly knew how to behave himself for joy. He begged his master to take what part of it he pleased, since he owed it all to his kindness. " No, no," answered Mr. Fitzwarren, " this is all your own ; and I have no doubt but you will use it well."

Dick next asked his mistress, and then Miss Alice, to accept a part of his good fortune ; but they would not, and at the same time told him they felt great joy at his good success. But this poor fellow was too kind-hearted to keep it all to himself ; so he made a present to the captain, the mate, and the rest of Mr. Fitzwarren's servants ; and even to the ill-natured old cook. •

After this Mr. Fitzwarren advised him to send for a proper tradesman and get himself dressed like a gentleman ; and told him he was welcome to live in his house till he could provide himself with a better.

When Whittington's face was washed, his hair curled, his hat cocked, and he was dressed in a nice suit of clothes, he was as handsome and genteel as any young man who visited at Mr. Fitzwarren's ; so that Miss Alice, who had once been so kind to him, and thought of him with pity, now looked upon him as fit to be her sweetheart ; and the more so, no doubt, because Whittington was now always thinking what he could do to oblige her, and making her the prettiest presents that could be.

Mr. Fitzwarren soon saw their love for each other, and proposed to join them in marriage ; and to this they both readily agreed. A day for the wedding was soon fixed ; and they were attended to church by the Lord Mayor, the court of aldermen, the sheriffs, and a great number of the richest merchants in London, whom they afterwards treated with a very rich feast.

History tells us that Mr. Whittington and his lady lived in great splendour, and were very happy. They had several children. He was Sheriff of London, also Mayor, and received the honour of knighthood by Henry V.

The figure of Sir Richard Whittington with his cat in his arms, carved in stone, was to be seen till the year 1780 over the archway of the old prison of Newgate, that stood across Newgate Street, in London.

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INTRODUCTION

THE tales in this book have been chosen from many sources, which represent the old haunts of people, fairy-tale people, like Mother Hubbard and Simple Simon, who figure in rhyme or legend. .

Some of these tales have been forgotten, and some have been lost or long-buried ; and there are several that may seem new to you who read them here to-day. Such a story is that of the elfin Green Knight, which is a case of a delightful old fairy-tale that grew into as delightful a romance. A romance indeed is little else than a fairy-tale for older folk. The romancers "swapped " (as schoolboys say) their good things, and in this way we get a story like that of King Arthur and the Giant of St. Michael's Mount, which comes from the noble old romancer, Sir Thomas Malory. For a fairy-tale, like a cat, has nine lives ; it can pass into many queer shapes, and yet not die. You may cut off its head, or drown it in sentiment or sea-water, or tie a moral to its tail ; but it will still survive, and be found sitting safe by the fire some winter night.

In some cases, north-country and other friends have helped me to find new versions of old favourites like

"The Lambton Worm." Every change in these tales has been made with a real regard for the jealous love that children feel for their favourites; and so the literary touches added by some earlier collectors have been got rid of here, and the simpler colours of folk-lore and nursery-lore restored.

That old favourite, "Jack the Giant-Killer," has been included in a version collated by Mrs. Grace Rhys from sundry old chap-books.

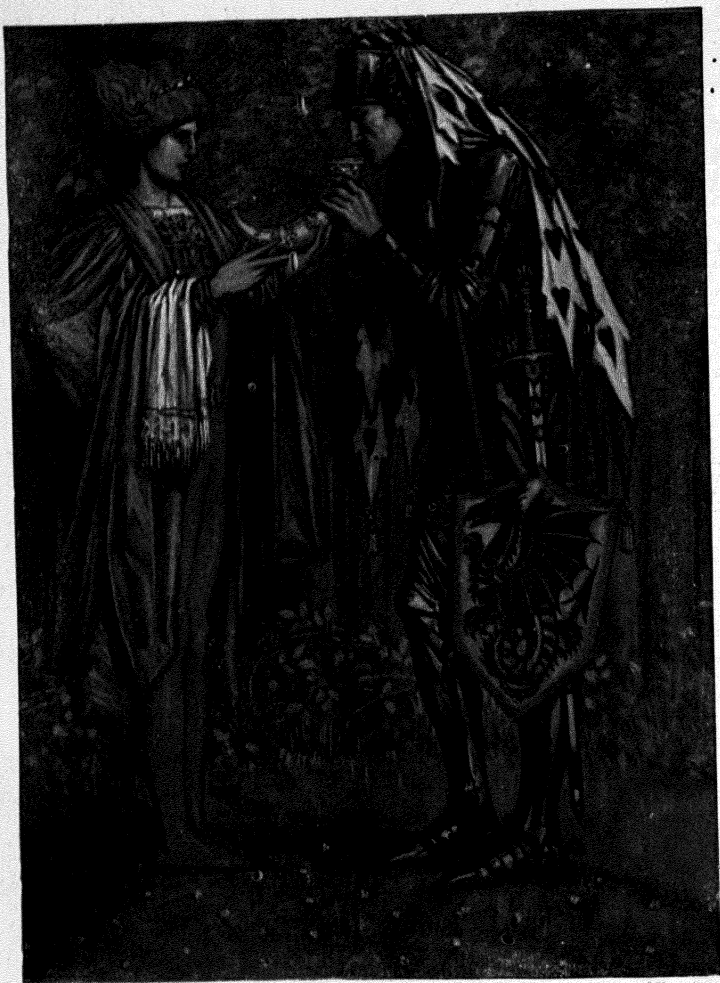
E. R.

**TALES FOR CHILDREN
FROM MANY LANDS**

EDITED BY F. C. TILNEY

VOLUMES IN THIS SERIES

KING ARTHUR AND HIS ROUND TABLE
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS
ENGLISH FAIRY TALES
THE WATER BABIES
PINOCCHIO
PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES
TALES FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS
FAIRY TALES FROM SPAIN
FEATS ON THE Fjord
ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY OUTLAWS
ROBINSON CRUSOE
THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON



The Knight was filled with envy.

[See p. 55]

ENGLISH FAIRY TALES

By
ERNEST & GRACE RHYS

Illustrated by
HERBERT COLE
&
R. ANNING BELL

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